The Forgotten Scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755-1809)

At the Dawn of Egyptology and Coptic Studies

Edited by

Karen Ascani, Paola Buzi and Daniela Picchi

CULTURE & HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The Forgotten Scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755–1809)

Culture and History of the Ancient Near East

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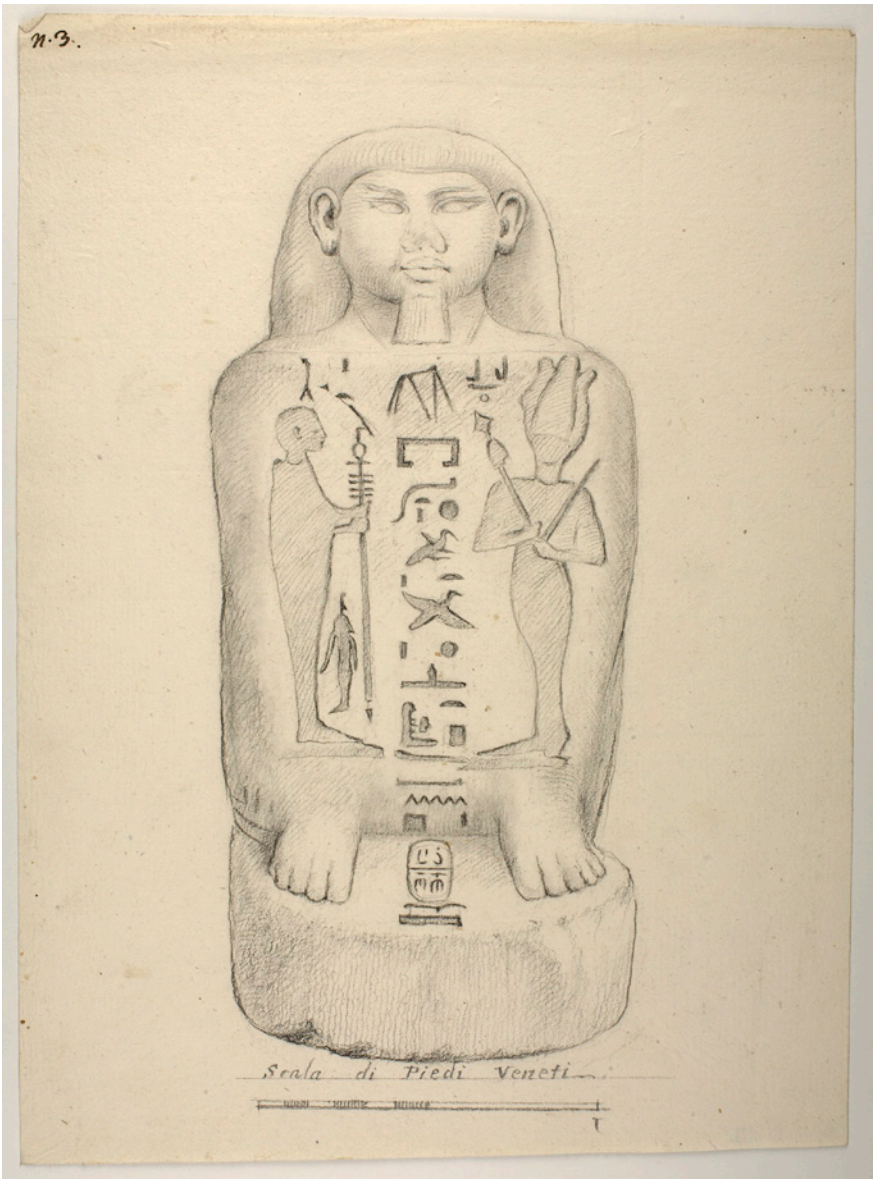

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Preface

A fruitful cooperation between the Archaeological Museum of Bologna, the Danish Academy in Rome, and the Department of History, Cultures and Religions of the "Sapienza" University of Rome was the starting point for the international scholarly project and conference "The Forgotten Scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755–1809)", held in Bologna and Rome from 27th to 30th October 2013.

The close relationship between the Danish and Italian scholarly communities has thus been strengthened in the name of the polymath Georg Zoëga. Renowned for his work within the fields of Numismatics, Archaeology, Egyptology and Coptic Studies, Zoëga was a figure of outstanding importance both in Rome and in Europe, at the end of the eighteenth century.

To disseminate knowledge is the great privilege of cultural institutions such as museums, academies and universities, and this project represented an exceptional occasion to rediscover the largely unknown scientific legacy of a scholar who quite suddenly, and almost inexplicably, disappeared from view in the early nineteenth century.

Thanks to the cooperation of many institutions, both Italian and Danish, and the fundamental economic support of the Carlsberg Foundation and Karen Ascani's Fond, it was thus possible to encourage a critical reading of Zoëga's legacy. Owing to the efforts of the many scholars involved in the project, a huge amount of unpublished archival documents have become the common heritage of the international scholarly community.

Writing history is a constant, never ending story, and new research projects related to Georg Zoëga are already being created as of now. This can be considered the project's foremost achievement.

The Organizing Committee

Introduction

Karen Ascani, Paola Buzi and Daniela Picchi

History can be ungenerous towards those who are involved in writing it. Such has been the destiny of Georg Zoëga, a distinguished Egyptologist, Coptologist, Archaeologist, and Numismatist, whose scientific and cultural contributions—highly valued by his contemporaries—fell almost entirely into oblivion with the end of the Enlightenment.

Born in Denmark from a family of Venetian origin, Georg Zoëga had firm cultural roots both in his native country and in Italy, where he lived from 1783 until his death in 1809. Rome and the scholarly circle under the patronage of Cardinal Stefano Borgia became Zoëga's home, where he welcomed many international scholars, 'celebrities', and dear friends, such as Goethe, Heyne, Dolomieu, Münter, Thorvaldsen.

In 1769 Stefano Borgia,[1] who was born in Velletri (Rome) in 1731 and died in Lyons in 1804, began to set up a collection, containing precious objects and curiosities from all over the world. The *Museo Borgiano*, on display at the Borgia Palace of Velletri, became one of the must-see destinations of the Italian Grand Tour, visited by scholars and other interested, mostly foreign, travellers, on their way from Rome to Naples. It was one of the most famous encyclopaedic museums in Italy, relevant also at European level, the only eighteenth-century residence-museum in Europe boasting Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, Pre-Latin, Roman, Arabic and Indian texts and artefacts, besides Medieval paintings and liturgical objects, maps, and the like that the Catholic missionaries would send to Borgia, as Secretary (and later Prefect) of the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. In particular, the Cardinal reserved a special predilection for ancient Egypt, to the point of creating the richest Egyptian collection in Europe before the Napoleonic expedition.

1 The bibliography dedicated to Cardinal Borgia is extremely large. See, in particular, H. Enzensberger, *Borgia, Stefano*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, (Roma: Treccani, 1970), 739–742 and Paolino da San Bartolomeo, *Vitae Synopsis Steph. Borgiae S.R.E. Cardinalis Amplissimi, S. Congr. de Propaganda Fide Praefecti Curante P. Paulino a S. Bartholomaeo Carmelita Disclaceato*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1805). Paolino da San Bartolomeo, a Carmelite monk of Austrian origin and an expert in oriental languages, thanks to his close friendship with the Cardinal, gave a very effective description of his personality and his scientific interests.

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At the request of the Cardinal, Zoëga dedicated himself to rearranging the Alexandrinian coins of the Museo Borgiano and published the relative catalogue, *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii prostantes in museo Borgiano Velitris*, in 1787. In the meantime, inspired by such a stimulating environment, he passionately studied the hundreds of Egyptian antiquities collected by his benefactor and prepared the *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani nel Museo Borgiano composto ed ordinato dal Sig. Giorgio Zoega dotto Danese nel mese di Ottobre del 1784*, which remained unpublished. This catalogue is fundamental to an in-depth knowledge of the Borgia collection and of Zoëga's methodological approach to the study of Egyptian material culture. Moreover, being also a brilliant philologist, he was charged by Pope Pius VI to write a dissertation focused on Roman obelisks, the meaning of whose inscriptions was, at the time, completely unknown. By transcribing and comparing the inscriptions on obelisks to those he found in the collections he had the opportunity to visit, Zoëga contributed to the decipherment of hieroglyphs and, in particular, identified some of their writing rules before J.-F. Champollion did.

He was equally devoted to the study of the Coptic language and literature, and was considered a major scholar in this field due to his monumental *Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur*, a detailed literary, codicological, and palaeographical description of the Borgia Coptic manuscripts, on parchment leaves now preserved in part in the National Library of Naples and in part in the Apostolic Vatican Library. After Borgia's death, Zoëga had to defend his copyright when the first edition of the catalogue was published in 1805, but the *de Propaganda Fide* Congregation and the Borgia heirs opposed him strongly. He did not live to see the new and more complete version of the catalogue, which was published posthumously in 1810.

Hundreds of letters, drawings, sketches, notes, and other documents, mainly preserved in The Royal Library and Thorvaldsens Museum of Copenhagen, represent Zoëga's scholarly bequest, which is almost entirely unknown[2] and often richer of insights than his printed volumes.

2 The interests of the three editors of this volume and their publications focused on Zoëga's manuscripts were the first starting point for the project "The Forgotten Scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755–1809)". Cf. P. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti Borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele III" di Napoli. Con un profilo scientifico di Stefano Borgia e Georg Zoega e una breve storia della formazione della collezione Borgiana*, (Roma: Scienze e Lettere, 2009); D. Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia: le antichità egiziane di Bologna e Venezia da un inedito di Georg Zoëga*, (Imola: La Mandragora, 2010); Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani

Taking advantage of the recent publication of Zoëga's letters and aiming at shedding light on his huge legacy of manuscripts, the editors of this book organized a working group of specialists in different disciplines interested in the Danish scholar's scientific personality and main research topics. The international conference "The Forgotten Scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755–1809)", which was held in Bologna (Archaeological Museum) and in Rome (Danish Academy) from 27th to 30th October 2013, represented the brainstorming session of this working group and the starting point for many other research projects.

This volume collects the papers presented and discussed on that occasion, subdivided in five thematic sections: "Zoëga and his time" introduces the eclectic personality of the Danish scholar, using the documentary sources related to his research work; "Zoëga and Numismatic Studies" recounts the innovative approach applied by the scholar to the study of important numismatic collections; "Zoëga and the origins of Egyptology" and "Zoëga and the origins of Coptic Studies", representing the core of the volume, detail the fundamental role played by Zoëga in the scholarly advancement of these two disciplines; lastly, "Zoëga and Rome" mentions his interest in the classical and oriental antiquities of Rome and its surrounding areas.

The first thematic section of the volume opens with Ivan Boserup's contribution ("Georg Koës and Zoëga's Manuscripts Preserved in The Royal Library in Copenhagen"), which illustrates the decisive role of the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, of Baron Herman Schubart, a diplomat representing Denmark in the Italian States, and of classical scholar Georg Koës, in the cataloguing and transferring of Zoëga's manuscripts from Rome to The Royal Library of Copenhagen, after he unexpectedly passed away on the 10th of February 1809. Furthermore, the author announces that the 1809 catalogue of Zoëga's manuscripts drawn up by Georg Koës will be published on-line as a downloadable pdf.

Kristine Bøggild Johannsen ("Relics of a Friendship. Objects from Georg Zoëga's Estate in Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen") reveals how more than 500 items, mainly drawings and engravings, but also books, antiquities, plaster casts, and possibly manuscripts, belonging to Zoëga ended up amongst Bertel Thorvaldsen's possessions and later entered the collections of the Thorvaldsens Museum in Copenhagen. For the first time the author presents a comprehensive account of these objects, which have never been studied until now and whose catalogue will soon be published on-line so as to complete the Museum's image database.

(hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für Dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013).

Karen Ascani ("Georg Zoëga in lettere") provides a vivid description of Zoëga's personality and scholarly versatility by means of passages from his letters addressed to friends, relatives, and scholars, which the author patiently collected and recently published in four volumes entitled *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V.[3] The result is a fascinating and surprising portrait, which does not neglect the inner aspects of Zoëga's character.

The influence of the teaching of Christian Gottlob Heyne on Zoëga's cultural formation is the topic of the article by Daniel Graepler ("Georg Zoëga und Christian Gottlob Heyne"). Before moving to Italy, Zoëga studied in Göttingen, where Heyne was professor of poetry and classics. Heyne's attempt at a scientific treatment of Greek mythology and archaeology, and the consequent rigorous philological approach to texts, in particular, strongly influenced Zoëga's heterogeneous scholarly production. Heyne, on the other hand, became a reviewer of the works of his pupils, always expressing a more than positive opinion on them.

The theme of philology and its role in Zoëga's work is developed by Alessandro Bausi ("Zoëga e la filologia"), who efficaciously shows how the entire production of the Danish scholar was based in fact on the consciousness that the philological approach—as opposed to a generic antiquarian attitude—was the "the basis of all human literature". In this respect the well-known polemic against Winckelmann, expressed by Zoëga's letter to Peter Frederik Suhm (1791), is taken into account.

Jesper Svenningsen deals with one of the lesser known aspects of Zoëga's activities, that of art critic ("Zoëga as Art Critic"). His regular reports to The Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen on the Roman art scene show how seriously Zoëga took this task. Svenningsen takes into consideration the forty-five extant reports, analysing Zoëga's thoughts on the imitation of classical art as well as the language and terminology he used in his writings.

Anne Haslund Hansen ("An Antiquarian Depicted. The Visual Reception of Georg Zoëga") discusses the visual reception of Zoëga, by examining his portraits (paintings and sculptures), both contemporary and posthumous. Assuming that the portrait as a genre is documentation and remembrance, but also interpretation, the author underlines how these images follow a meandering line of the shifting perceptions of Georg Zoëga, spanning almost a century and a half.

In the last article of the first section, Tobias Fischer-Hansen ("Georg Zoëga and Friedrich Münter. The Significance of Their Relationship") completes the description of Zoëga's cultural context, by taking into consideration the affec-

3 The documents are quoted in the following pages as 'letter/lettre/lettera/Briefe n.' . . .

tive and scholarly relationship that tied him to Friedrich Münter, a prominent specialist of Church history, early Christian iconography and the dogmas of the Christian religion, but also an Orientalist and a Coptologist. Münter was Zoëga's main correspondent through the years 1785 to 1808 and in his letters he alternated questions related to the more disparate aspects of research to concern for Zoëga's situation after his marriage to Maria Petruccioli.

The second section of the volume is completely devoted to numismatics, which is one of the main fields in which Zoëga showed his skills.

Daniela Williams and Bernhard Woytek ("Zoëga studente di numismatica. Il soggiorno a Vienna (1782) e i contatti con Joseph Eckhel") dwell upon the period that Zoëga spent in Vienna as a student of Joseph Hilarius Eckhel. This stay was programmed as a consequence of the unification of the Danish numismatic collections and the fact that the Danish government identified Zoëga as the scholar who was to take care of them. He was therefore charged with visiting the main European collections of numismatics and with studying with Eckhel. Despite such an apprenticeship being fundamental for the realization of the *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii*, his only numismatic work, immediately after Zoëga took a different path. Indeed he devoted himself to other studies and decided to stay in Italy, renouncing the role of curator of the Danish Coin Cabinet.

Laurent Bricault ("Zoëga, pionnier de la numismatique alexandrine") describes in details the genesis of the above mentioned *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii*, the progresses and the periods of frustrations lived by Zoëga in preparing the catalogue, which was to be a fundamental point of references for numismatists for a long time. The role of Stefano Borgia, both as a patron of the arts and as a collector, again emerges clearly.

The third thematic section opens with Thomas Christiansen's contribution ("On the Origins of an Egyptologist"), dedicated to Zoëga's second stay in Copenhagen. During the ten months spent in Copenhagen, between July 1781 and May 1782, a period which, surprisingly, is only briefly touched upon in his biographies, Zoëga was introduced to influential politicians and scholars interested in Oriental Studies and gave his first extensive reports on ancient Egyptian objects. The author considers these experiences a prerequisite for a proper evaluation of the beginning of Zoëga's career as an Antiquarian and an Egyptologist.

The contributions of Maria Cristina Guidotti ("In visita alla 'Grande Galleria': l'antico Egitto a Firenze") and Daniela Picchi ("The Egyptian Antiquities in Bologna and Venice at Zoëga's Time") efficaciously demonstrate the importance of Zoëga's manuscripts preserved in The Royal Library of Copenhagen both for the history of collecting Egyptian antiquities and their methodological

study. In particular, the authors analyse Zoëga's travel diary *Diarium itineris Roma Venetias et retro facti Lugl. 3–Settemb. 9. 1789* and its related notes *Monumenti antichi osservati nel viaggio fatto nell'anno 1789 nei mesi di Luglio, Agosto, Settembre*, which mainly highlight the scholar's interest in ancient Egypt and its writing system. On the occasion of this tour from Rome to Venice, Zoëga had the chance to study the Egyptian antiquities preserved in Florence, Bologna, Padua and Venice, collecting all sorts of information about their texts, decorations, materials, state of conservation, size, and features. Thanks to Zoëga's detailed descriptions and sketches, the authors have been able to identify most of these antiquities—in the worst cases from a typological point of view at least—, as well as to follow their movements from one collection to another, from one city to another in later centuries.

Stefania Mainieri and Rosanna Pirelli ("Georg Zoëga and the Borgia Collection of Egyptian Antiquities: Cataloguing as a Method") deal with an aspect of Zoëga's activity that is strictly connected to the above described contributions. He was the first scholar to study the Borgia collection of Egyptian antiquities, now preserved in the Egyptian section of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. His observations were collected in the *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani nel Museo Borgiano composto ed ordinato dal Sig. Giorgio Zoëga dotto Danese nel mese di Ottobre del 1784*, two unpublished copies of which have survived, the first in The Royal Library of Copenhagen, while the second in the Municipal Library in Velletri. The comparison between the two copies helps in understanding both the progressive enlargement of Borgia's Egyptian collection and the consequent adaptation of Zoëga's approach to its classification and cataloguing.

Leafing through other important documents preserved at The Royal Library of Copenhagen, Paul John Frandsen ("A Concealed Attempt at Deciphering Hieroglyphs") identifies and analyses the two types of 'tools' which show the enormous progresses made by Zoëga in the decipherment of ancient Egyptian language: lists of hieroglyphs organized in sign-lists, and copies of monuments with numbers replacing hieroglyphs. The systematic approach of the Danish scholar to this study, based also on his good knowledge of Coptic, shows that he was convinced that a proper ability to read Egyptian texts was the key for a true and comprehensive knowledge of ancient Egypt as well as a deeper insight and understanding of the ancient Greek and Roman civilization.

Again the article by Patricia Usick (" 'Covered with the Rust of Egyptian Antiquity': Thomas Ford Hill and the Decipherment of Hieroglyphs") is dedicated to the deciphering of hieroglyphs. The author illustrates the efforts of Thomas Ford Hill (1753–1795), an Englishman who, at the same time as Zoëga,

was trying to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs. His letters to Zoëga included drawings of some of the earliest inscribed Egyptian antiquities to arrive in the British Museum. Moreover, Hill often sent the Danish scholar summaries and translations of books to which Zoëga had no other access, in an atmosphere of active scholarly collaboration which arouses surprise and admiration.

Lastly, Emanuele Ciampini ("*De origine et usu obeliscorum*: Some Notes on an Eighteenth-century Egyptological Study") points out how Zoëga definitely abandoned the magical and hermetic approach to the study of Egyptian obelisks in what is probably his most famous work, the *De origine et usu obeliscorum*, by analysing these huge monoliths and their carved inscriptions merely as documents of the pharaonic civilization. At the same time the inscriptions carved on these monuments represented a valuable help for him in the long-desired decipherment of the ancient Egyptian writing system.

If Zoëga's role in the formation of modern scientific Egyptology has still to be largely explored, on the other hand his part in the history of Coptic Studies is widely recognized, as the fourth thematic section of the volume clearly shows.

Tito Orlandi ("Gli studi copti fino a Zoëga") traces an overview of Coptic Studies from the Council of Florence to the reports of the explorers (such as Pietro Della Valle and George Sandys), and to the first specialist of Coptic culture and language, from Athanasius Kircher and Étienne Quatremère to scholars more or less contemporary to Zoëga: Amedeo Peyron, Ludwig Stern, Tommaso Valperga di Caluso, Jacob Adler, and Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli. Despite the great merits of all these precursors, Zoëga's monumental personality stands out amongst all of them and represents a milestone in the history of Coptology.

The 'discovery' of Shenoute, the most prominent and prolific author of Coptic literature and archimandrite of a federation of monastic communities, coordinated by the so-called White Monastery of Atripe, a small village not far from Panopolis/Akhmim (Upper Egypt), was certainly one of the main merits of Zoëga in Coptic Studies, as Anne Boud'hors demonstrates ("Chénouté et Zoëga: l'auteur majeur de la littérature copte révélé par le savant danois"). Not only did Zoëga succeed in identifying in Shenoute an important author, but he also managed to reconstruct the codicological units of the Borgia fragments containing his works, even attempting a palaeographical classification.

One of the main scholarly efforts of Zoëga is certainly the already mentioned *Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Velitris adservantur* (1810), whose genesis is traced by Paola Buzi ("*The Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Velitris adservantur*. Genesis of a Masterpiece"), once more by means of the unpublished papers preserved in The

Royal Library of Copenhagen and in the Apostolic Vatican Library. The result of such an effort is even more admirable if one considers that, when Zoëga set about realizing his catalogue of the Borgia Coptic manuscripts, he could only count on one example of such an enterprise, the *Ægyptiorum codicum reliquiæ Venetiis in bibliotheca Naniana asseruatæ* by Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli.

The first two articles of last section of the volume aim to remind the reader that the contribution given by Zoëga, through his personal involvement and his always precious notes, to the study of archaeology and history of collections in Rome and in Latium is not any less important than all his other commitments.

Beatrice Palma Venetucci ("Il collezionismo di *orientalia* nella Roma di Pio VI") portrays Zoëga as a careful and acute observer of *orientalia*—both to be intended as objects exposed in private collections or as monuments still *in situ* (such as the temple of Mithras "Fagan" in Ostia)—about which however he frequently expressed a negative aesthetic opinion.

Beatrice Cacciotti ("Georg Zoëga e gli scavi nel territorio laziale"), making use above all of the manuscript *Apparatus ad Auctoris opus: Bassirilievi antichi di Roma*, describes the fervour with which, at the end of the eighteenth century, the *campagna romana* was explored by several archaeological excavations, among which those undertaken by Antonio Despuig y Dameto in Vallericcia, as Zoëga's notes—very rich in information—also attest.

Lastly, Adelheid Müller ("Friederike Brun, Elisa von der Recke and Georg Zoëga: Members of the '*Universitas* of Rome' ") depicts the lively community of artists, experts of archaeology, historians and philologists who in Rome created an educational establishment (*Universitas*) beyond institutional environments and gender-based restrictions and the role that two prominent female scholars, Friederike Brun and Elisa von der Recke, played in that context, with a specific attention to their scientific relationship with Zoëga.

As already said, this volume represents a first concrete result of the Italo-Danish project "The Forgotten Scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755–1809)", which has already inspired and produced several new scientific researches and initiatives.

It is worth mentioning, for instance, a project which is connected to the Borgia Egyptian collection preserved in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples that, closed since 2007, is still waiting to be re-exposed according to modern criteria and therefore re-opened to the public. Such a project aims to carry out a complete study of the whole Egyptian collection and in particular of the artefacts once belonging to Stefano Borgia. The two extant copies *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani nel Museo Borgiano composto ed ordinato dal Sig. Giorgio Zoega dotto Danese nel mese di Ottobre del 1784* will be the funda-

mental starting point for the reconsideration of the entire Borgia collection. In order to accomplish this task, the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli and the University of Naples "l'Orientale", as promoters of the research project and museum display, have assigned a regional scholarship for a PhD research, which is already giving its first results.

Another research project, "Georg Zoëga e il *Latium Vetus*", which is coordinated by Beatrice Cacciotti and the University of Rome "Tor Vergata", is focused on the *ager Aricinus* (Vallericcia) and the area of the forum of *Gabii*. Once again Zoëga's manuscripts, being a direct and primary source, allow both to recover epigraphic and sculptural elements and to understand archaeological contexts, which were discovered at the end of the eighteenth century and are now almost completely destroyed. Thanks to the so obtained information, this research aims to update the scholarly interpretations accepted up to now on decorative programmes adopted in these fields and on the organization and features of spaces for public and private use.

An additional tangible result of this endeavour is the online publication of the entire catalogue of the "Objects from Georg Zoëga's Estate in Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen", under the auspices of the Thorvaldsens Museum Archives (http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/articles/relics-of-a-friendship).

Meanwhile, the study and the publication of Zoëga's papers preserved in The Royal Library of Copenhagen is progressing, and it is easy to image that new unexpected aspects of the eclectic personality of the scholar will be revealed in the next few years.

• • •

The editors would like to thank the colleagues who enthusiastically joined this project and the institutions who supported it, above all the Archaeological Museum of Bologna and the Danish Academy of Rome that hosted the conference. Furthermore, the editors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Carlsberg Foundation and the Karen Ascani's Fond that financed the project. We are also grateful to Ivan Boserup, Director of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books of The Royal Library, Copenhagen, as well as to the Thorvaldsens Museum, for their kind collaboration in making Zoëga's manuscripts permanently available to scholars and for their kind permission to reproduce Zoëga's documents free of charge.

K.A., P.B., D.P.

Bologna – Rome, September 2014

The following persons and institutions deserve special mention for their contributions to this project.

Scientific Commitee
Karen Ascani, Paola Buzi, Daniela Picchi

Organizing Committee
Archaeological Museum of Bologna, *Paola Giovetti, Daniela Picchi*
Danish Academy of Rome, *Marianne Pade*
Department of History, Cultures and Religions, "Sapienza" University of Rome, *Paola Buzi*
Karen Ascani's Fond, *Karen Ascani*

With the Institutional Collaboration of
The Royal Library, Copenhagen
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Hosting Institutions
Archaeological Museum
Via dell'Archiginnasio, 2
Bologna

Danish Academy
Via Omero, 18
Rome

Organizing Secretary
Archaeological Museum of Bologna, *Daniela Picchi*
"Sapienza" University of Rome, *Paola Buzi*
Danish Academy of Rome, *Pia Hansen, Maria Adelaide Zocchi*

in collaboration with
Archaeological Museum of Bologna, *Laura Bentini, Federica Guidi*
and *Carlotta Bonifazi, Noemi Brugnettini, Elisabetta Dall'Olio, Vittoria Di Giorgio, Daniela Ferrari, Serena Nicolini*

Technical Staff
Archaeological Museum of Bologna, *Augusto Arrigo, Elena Canè, Rocco Ciardo, Angelo Febbraro*

Graphics
Massimo Bozzoli

Zoëga and His Time

CHAPTER 1

Georg Koës and Zoëga's Manuscripts Preserved in The Royal Library in Copenhagen

Ivan Boserup

Georg Koës (1782–1811)[1] was a Danish classical scholar, who had studied under Fr. A. Wolf at the University of Halle and wrote his doctoral dissertation (1806) on Homer's *Odyssey* in the vein of Wolf's famous *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795). He then accompanied his friend and brother-in-law Peter Oluf Brøndsted (1780–1842),[2] another highly gifted young Danish classicist, later to become professor of Classical Studies at the University of Copenhagen, on his topographical study tour to Greece, at that time part of the Ottoman Empire. The two friends prepared themselves intellectually through four years, 1806–1810, first in Paris, in the Manuscript Room of the Bibliothèque imperiale, today the Bibliothèque nationale de France, then in Rome and Naples. Koës met Zoëga in Rome in December 1808, and was well introduced by him to the personnel of the Vatican Library. Zoëga had lived in Rome since 30 January 1783, since 1798 as representative of the Danish State, and since 1804 with a salary as a Danish university professor.

Two months later, Koës was in Naples, collating manuscripts of Pausanias and studying collections of antiquities, when Zoëga unexpectedly passed away on 10 February, 1809, at the age of 54. A friend of Zoëga, the famous Danish sculptor Bertel (Alberto) Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), who had been living in Rome since 1797, had hastily packed Zoëga's manuscripts in a sealed chest and had it delivered to the house of the German diplomat Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt, then residing in Rome. He had then briefed Baron Herman Schubart (1756–1832),[3] the Danish diplomat representing Denmark in the Italian states,

1 For general information on Georg Koës (as well as P.O. Brøndsted, G. Zoëga, B. Thorvaldsen, and H. Schubart), see *Dansk biografisk leksikon*, (København: Gyldendal, 1979–1984[3]), 1–15. For Koës and Brøndsted, furthermore: I. Boserup, "Klassisk filologi efter 1800", in *Københavns universitet 1479–1979*, VIII, redigeret af P. Johs. Jensen, L. Grane, (København: G.E.C. Gads, 1992), 294–298.

2 For recent assessments of his various activities see *P.O. Brøndsted (1780–1842). A Danish Classicist in His European Context*, Hist.Filos.Skr.Dan.Vid.Selsk. 31, edited by B. Bundgaard Rasmussen *et al.*, (Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2008).

3 E. Barellai, *Un diplomatico danese in Italia nell'Ottocento, Herman Schubart ed Elise Wieling*, (Odense: Odense, University Press, 1998).

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who was residing near Pisa. On 20 February 1809, ten days after Zoëga's death, Schubart writes to Thorvaldsen and finds his initiative very wise: "Since I do not want any Italian to stick his nose into these manuscripts, I intend to invite our young but learned compatriot Dr. Koës to look through them and make an exact listing and classification. I have written to him in Naples".[4] Koës, then aged 27, accepted.

Zoëga had converted to Catholicism and founded a family with Maria Petruccioli (1763–1807), and was largely an assimilated citizen of Rome, but he was still by nationality a Dane and a Danish civil servant. It was important that his manuscripts were not taken over by local authorities or gradually dispersed and plagiarized. In Schubart's view, the manuscripts were maybe the only basis on which one could secure some resources for Zoëga's three (out of nine) surviving and now orphaned children. In order to support their interests in the best possible way, he had to know the exact contents of the chest and have a professional estimate of their intellectual value. It appears that it was Schubart's plan to sell author's rights of unpublished works of Zoëga on behalf of his children.[5] Schubart had recently been in contact with the two young and learned 'tourists' Brøndsted and Koës, and found that there was a unique possibility at hand to have Zoëga's manuscripts put in order, described, and evaluated quickly and professionally, without involving any local intellectuals or authorities. One month after Zoëga's death, on 10 March, 1809, Schubart announces to Thorvaldsen that Koës has accepted, and he suggests that Koës gets access to the chest in Thorvaldsen's house in via Sistina, where supposedly it had remained, sealed till then, after being moved from the Humboldt residence. Taking no risks, Schubart sternly instructs Thorvaldsen to see to it that Koës, a newcomer to Italy, in this matter keeps strictly himself aloof from Italians:

> If Dr. Koes needs help regarding the oriental study area, he must in no way seek it among the Italians, but rather search counsel among the Germans, because the Italians are what one calls *Furbi*, and they can easily make use of Zoega's property.[6]

4 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, v, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), 395, letter n. 1266c, my translation and italics.

5 Ibid., 393, letter n. 1266b.

6 Ibid., 400, letter n. 1267b, my translation and italics.

Koës completed the job, apparently in Thorvaldsen's house, between March and 14 May, 1809.[7] The chest was then brought to Baron Schubart's residence Montenero near Livorno. Six months later, by Royal Danish Resolution dated 14th November 1809, Zoëga's manuscripts were acquired by the Danish State for The Royal Library against a pension for the benefit of the three orphaned children, and it was entrusted to the Director of the library, D.G. Moldenhawer (1753–1823), to arrange that suitable parts were published.[8] Together with Koës' catalogue, Zoëga's manuscripts were via Livorno brought to Copenhagen by ship, accompanied by Baron Schubart himself, and in the Spring of 1811 handed over to The Royal Library, where they ultimately became n. 357b in the folio shelving of the New Royal Collection [Ny kgl. Saml., or NKS], that is, NKS 357b fol., subdivided into seventeen main sections corresponding to sections I–XVII of Koës' 1809 catalogue, see plate 1.1 (Print-ready = Ought to be published).

Two copies of Koës' catalogue, both kept together with NKS 2392 4to, probably came to The Royal Library after the death of Brøndsted, that is, some time after 1842: Koës' own manuscripts had after his death been taken over by Brøndsted, and the manuscripts of Koës are still today more or less integrated in Brøndsted's personal archive NKS 2400 4to. Probably, both had kept a private copy of Koës' catalogue for later use, and both copies were taken out of Brøndsted's archive when it was established in the late nineteenth century.

Koës' detailed registration fills about 60 4to pages. It is written in Danish, in 'gothic cursive' (except quotations in Italian of Zoëga's own words, and bibliographical references in Latin). Zoëga was according to reports, and as exemplified by his manuscripts, extremely well organized in his scholarly work, and there is no reason to imagine that Koës substantially rearranged Zoëga's manuscripts: Thorvaldsen would not have rearranged anything, and no one else had had an opportunity to interfere with the contents of the sealed chest since 10 February, 1809. Much indicates that Thorvaldsen preserved units of manuscripts as he found them, and that Koës also registered and left everything as found upon opening the chest. Particularly important Egyptological letters from Thomas Hill are still today kept within Zoëga's own material at relevant locations, and many bundles of Zoëga's manuscripts are still today wrapped in single proof sheets of *De origine et usu obeliscorum ad Pium Sextum pontificem maximum* with Zoëga's annotations regarding the contents, distinguishable from annotations by Koës based on his I–XVII numbering. It is clear that Koës

7 Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Aus dem Briefwechsel Friedrich Münters. Europäische Beziehungen eines Dänischen Gelehrten 1780–1830*, II, (Kopenhagen-Leipzig: P. Haase & Sohn; Otto Harrassowitz, 1944), 135 (Friedrich Münter. Eine Gedenkschrift, VII).

8 Ibid., 135.

Koës' Catalogue 1809

	Pp.	Entries/ Units		Koës 1809	Welcker '19
I	1	3	Catalogue of Coptic Borgia manuscripts [Published 1810]	Print-ready	
II	½	1	Drawings of hieroglyphs and other Egyptian antiquities		
III	4	5	Catalogue of 700 Borgia gems and amulets	Print-ready	Print-ready (4)
IV	1	2	Excerpts and Notes concerning Imperial Egyptian Borgia coins		
V	11	7	Topography of Rome in French (240 monuments), German, Italian	Print-ready	Print-ready (1)
VI	4	20	Excerpts and Notes on Greek and Roman religion, and on Homer		
VII	13	6	Descriptions made for the unpublished 90% of Bassirilievi di Roma	Print-ready	Print-ready (3)
VIII	1	1	Excerpts and Notes (3) on Greek and Roman authors [1–3 ca. 4,000 *pp*]		
IX	2	6	Excerpts and Notes (1) on Greek and Roman authors		
X	1	5	Excerpts and Notes on Greek and Roman religious concepts.		
XI	1	3	Excerpts and Notes (2) on Hesiod, Gr. tragedies, Pindar, Hom. hymns		
XII	2	10	Excerpts from modern scholars (Chandler, Gorius, Winckelmann)		
XIII	4	17	Travel diaries. Papers by Zoëga on ancient religion [Published 1817]	Print-ready	Print-ready (2)
XIV	2	6	Excerpts and Notes other ancient people [ca. 2,000 *pp*]		
XV	1	5	Excerpts on modern art and history		
XVI	1	5	Excerpts from modern poets, Vasari, works on mineralogy etc.		
XVII	4	7	Subject index to all Zoëga's excerpts [ca. 1,400 entries]		
Suppl.	1	1	17 printed works with annotations by Zoëga		
	53	110			

PLATE 1.1 *Overview of Zoëga's manuscripts in Copenhagen, The Royal Library, NKS 357b fol.*

considered that it was his remit simply to describe the material as it had been stowed into the chest by Thorvaldsen, and sealed.

In The Royal Library in Copenhagen, Koës' Danish catalogue in seventeen groups (I–XVII) with numerous sub- and sub-sub-sections, was abbreviated and reformulated in Latin and inscribed in the catalogue of the Manuscript Collection. Over the years, besides a few apparent losses, this led to some elements being misplaced, since patrons would refer according to one system to elements that were filed according to a less detailed one (but still in 17 main groups), and later put back in a wrong place, eventually giving the impression that a third system of ordering was in vigor. Owing to the wide range of Zoëga's interests, probably, the task of reintroducing perfect order into Zoëga's archive was not taken up, either in the age of the handwritten catalogue, or in that of the current computerized catalogue, where the abbreviated Latin list is reproduced and presented as the only key to the manuscripts.

In his listing of Zoega's manuscripts, in a number of cases, Koës pointed out that material was ready for printing, or nearly so, or could easily be made ready to be published by some talented young scholar. One can imagine that he would have followed up on it later, but he died only two years later, on 6 September 1811, on the island Zakynthos (Zanthe), at that time (1797–1815) under French rule.

Denmark had sided with Napoleon in 1807. Copenhagen had the same year been bombed by the English, and by 1813 the state was bankrupt. Publication in Denmark of Zoëga's unpublished works did not happen. Moldenhawer had in 1809 planned the publication of a series of volumes, a "Museum", with the most unique and valuable material from the collections, and much of Zoëga's 'print-ready' papers could have fitted in that context.[9] However, in March 1813, F.G. Welcker (1784–1868), who at that time was Professor of Greek Literature and Achaeology[10] in Giessen, was allowed access to Zoëga's papers, and he published four years later, translated into German from Danish or Italian, ten partly unpublished papers by Zoëga together with his own additions.[11] Welcker had been a close friend and admirer of Zoëga right from his arrival to Rome in

9 For Moldenhawer's ambitious "Museum" plans, immediately thwarted by the bad financial situation of the state, see E.C. Werlauff, *Historiske Efterretninger om det store kongelige Bibliothek i Kiøbenhavn*, (København: Samfundet til den danske Literaturs Fremme, 1844[2]), 322–335.

10 Welcker was appointed at the suggestion of Wilhelm von Humboldt, and it was the first chair of Archaeology at a German university.

11 *Georg Zoegas Abhandlungen*. Herausgegeben und mit Zusätzen begleitet von F.G. Welcker, (Göttingen: in der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1817).

1806 as 'tutor' of the Wilhelm von Humboldt household. Welcker's initiative no doubt inspired Brøndsted, and he was in 1818 allowed, as newly appointed Court Agent to the Papal See, to borrow section V of Zoëga's manuscripts, and bring it with him to Rome, where, as he had explained, he would have checked *in situ* Zoëga's descriptions of monuments and prepared the publication of Zoëga's *Topography of Rome*.[12] All surplus revenues would go to Zoega's children, according to his plan. But his plan never materialized. Brøndsted died in 1842, aged 62, within few hours of having fallen from his horse on one of his daily rides in the park of Frederiksberg Castle in Copenhagen.

In 1819, in an appendix to his great biography of Zoëga (which included a selection of his letters), Welcker gave an overview of Zoëga's "Nachgelassene Schriften und Papiere".[13] It is based on Koës' original registration, stressing even more than Koës the 'print-ready' aspect of substantial parts of the Zoëga archive in Copenhagen. The overview is structured into (A) what should be published in the future or be further reworked, in eight sections, of which the four last regard quite limited projects, and (B) Zoëga's material only for his own use.

It testifies to the quality of Koës' work that Welcker agrees with him on what should be published, and in only one case[14] mentions that Koës has made an error in his assessment of the status of Zoega's work. Welcker also repeats as his own some of Koës' personal assessments, such as his comment regarding Zoëga's opinions on Homer[15] as agreeing on many points with those expressed by Wolf in his 1795 *Prolegomena*, but dated 1788 in Zoëga's manuscript (VI.11 = Koës VI, 8, g), years before the appearance of Wolf's pathbreaking thesis.[16]

Recently, Daniela Picchi has discovered and published important information on Egyptian antiquities in collections in Bologna and in the Veneto in one of Zoëga's *Travel diaries*,[17] which also gives unique insights into Zoëga's working method in what seems to have been a project to survey all Egyptian

12 Welcker had published a small sample of the Topography in *Zoegas Abhandlungen*.

13 F.G. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben. Sammlung feiner Briefe und Beurtheilung seiner Werke*, I–II, (Stuttgart – Tübingen: in der J.G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1819), 426–427.

14 Ibid., II, 441.

15 Ibid., II, 433.

16 Koës writes: "It Includes some interesting remarks on Homer, the Iliad and the Odyssey etc., on some points, Z. is close to F.A. Wolf, whose Prolegomena, however, had not yet at that time been published". See also Welcker's note to his publication of Zoëga's "Homer", in *Zoegas Abhandlungen*, 306–315: 315, referring to his opinions on Homer as early as 1779.

17 D. Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia. Le antichità egiziane di Bologna e di Venezia da un inedito di Georg Zoëga*, (Imola: La Mandragora, 2010).

material in private and public collections within the Italian states. This project, too, was interrupted by Zoëga's untimely death.

The Zoëga archive, like the recently completed publication of his *Briefe und Dokumente* in seven volumes (I: 1967; II–V: 2013; VI, Index of names) is a monument that celebrates Zoëga's work and vision. The Danish archaeologist Kai Friis Johansen wrote in 1935 a masterly paper entitled "Georg Zoëga and Rome".[18] He stressed the impression of haphazardness of Zoëga's published works, but warned the reader from believing that there was no plan and no consistency in Zoëga's scholarly activities. On the contrary, he writes, Zoëga had a very clear vision for revolutionizing the study of the ancient world, that is, of making it 'scientifically based' not only regarding the written heritage, but also with respect to the material remains of Egypt, Greece and Rome. The plan and vision, however, was so vast, that in his short lifetime, he could only complete a few, apparently disconnected building blocks of the new edifice constituted by exhaustive and exact knowledge of the ancient world, rather than empty speculations based on fragmentary and unsystematically collected evidence. Friis Johansen wrote:

> Zoega's published works convey an impression of incongruity and of dependency on the initiatives of others, but such an impression does not match the truth. If one follows his studies based on the testimony of his *correspondence* and of his *manuscripts*, one understands that with one single exception, all the main elements of his widespread research activities have their origin in coherent endeavors focused on a common end.[19]

The aim was the establishment of a scientific study of the culture (religion and ideas) of Egypto-Greco-Roman antiquity, based on all available sources.

While the correspondence displays the theory behind Zoëga's vision of the new science of antiquity, originally inspired by Christian Gottlob Heyne and developed by many scholars during the nineteenth century, who were themselves, like Welcker, inspired by Zoëga, his 'exhausting' collection of Excerpts and Notes, all well-ordered and indexed, is the other side of the coin, that is, his preparation for the enactment of his monumental plan.

As Professor of Classical Archaeology in the twentieth century, Friis Johansen of course had to stress that for example Zoega's *Topography of Rome* was outdated. As a guide to Rome, it should probably only be recommended to those

18 K. Friis Johansen, "Georg Zoëga og Rom", in *Rom og Danmark gennem Tiderne*, I, redigeret af L. Bobé, (København: Levin & Munksgaard, 1935), 223–267.

19 Ibid., 246, my translation and italics.

that know Rome but are interested in knowing how Zoëga ca. 1800 approached the topic, when guiding Danish celebrities, young artists and young scholars around the antiquities of the city.

Appendix

The Latin abbreviated version of Georg Koës' catalogue, as published online in the catalogue of The Royal Library, Copenhagen.[20] The ten papers that have been published in German by Welcker in 1817, are here marked with an asterisk (*).

I.1) *Autographum auctoris operis inscripti: Catalogus codicum mss. qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris asservantur. Romæ, 1810.*

I.2) *Collectanea et Excerpta ad catalogum codd. copticorum pertinentia.*

II) *Delineationes Monumentorum Ægyptiacorum cum explicationibus et annotationibus.*

III.1) Catalogo dei monumenti Egiziani in Velletri nel Museo Borgiano. 1784. *Ab alia manu transscripta cum auctoris correctionibus et additionibus.*

III.2) *Ejusdem operis Epitome, ut videtur, anno 1800 confecta.*

III.3.a) *Observationes ad monumenta antiquitatis Ægyptiacæ plurumque gentium, præsertim Romæ asservata.*

III.3.b) *Excerpta ad monumenta antiquitatis pertinentia.*

IV.1) *Excerpta et notitiæ ad rem numariam tam universæ antiquitatis, quam Ægyptiacæ, ut in auctoris opere: Numi Ægyptii etc. exhibetur. Inest recensio, italico idiomate conscripta, libri, cui titulus*: Beskrivelse over Danske Mynter og Medailler i den Kgl. Samling.

IV.2) *Catalogus nummorum inscriptus: Numi unciales Velitris in Musæo Borgiano adservati.*

IV.3) *Schedæ inscriptæ*: Note e studj di Numismatica, *quarum initium non auctoris manum prodet.*

V) *Descriptio urbis Romæ* [*A sample was published by Welcker in 1817].

VI.1) *Memoria sui Monumenti Romani spettanti al culto Mithriaco, *cum excerptis ad eandem rem pertinentibus.*

VI.2) **Tractatus, qui inscribitur* Sul Dio primigenio degli Orfici, *ad eumque collectanea.*

VI.3) *Enchodii catechesis de assumptione Mariæ* e cod. ms. Copt. Mus. Borg. versa.

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20 See also P. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti Borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele III" di Napoli*, Accademia dei Lincei Classe di scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche—Memorie, Serie IX, Volume XXV, Fascicolo 1, (Roma: Scienze e Lettere, 2009), 445–448. A transcription of the 1809 Danish catalogue of Georg Koës will in 2015 be appended to the online record as a printable pdf.

VI.4) *Excerpta imprimis linguam Ægyptiacam spectantia.*

VI.5) *Tractatus, qui inscribitur*: *Licurgo domato dalle Menadi, bassorilievo sulla facciata d'una cassa sepolcrale esistente nel giardinetto del palazzo Borghese, *cum collectaneis ejusdem argumenti.*

VI.6) *Collectanea ad mythologiam pertinentia.*

VI.7) *Apostrophus dithyrambicus ad Noctem, stylo prosaico italice conscriptus.*

VI.8) *Osservazioni su un monumento del museo P. Cl. [*scil.* Pio-Clementino] dato alla tavola 25 del Tomo 40.

[Lacuna: VI.9) "Nella rotonda del museo [Casa Chigi?] destinata per le opere colossali vedonsi cinque statue e dieci teste" (1 folium)]

VI.10) **Tractatus italico sermone scriptus, cujus in fronte exstat*: "*agathœi tychœi*" Tyche e Nemesis.—*Ejusdem commentationis emendatius exemplar.*

VI.11) **Observationes super Homeri Iliadem et Odysseam, quæ* "Omero" *inscriptæ sunt.*

VII) *Apparatus ad auctoris opus*: "Bassirilievi antichi di Roma", *continens descriptiones Anaglyphorum tam Romæ quam in aliis Italiæ regionibus exstantium, et quæ ad horum monumentorum illustrationem pertinere videantur.*

VIII) *Excerpta ex græcis et latinis scriptoribus tam profanis quam christianis, quibus additus est index auctorum.*

IX.1) *Folium inscriptum: Epigrammata anecdota e celebri Anthologiæ cod. in Bibl. Vaticana, excerpta a Guil. Uhden.*

IX.2) **De Lycurgo et Spartanis observationes.*

IX.3) *Excerpta e Dionysio Halicarn., Platone, cet., historici maxime argumenti.*

IX.4) *Excerpta ex Chandleri Marmora Oxoniensia 1763.*

IX.5) *Apographum Horapollinis hieroglyphicorum cur. J.C. de Pauw, cum observationibus criticis, imprimis in editoris commentarium.*

IX.6) *Excerpta ex Homeri carminibus inscripta: Homeri Ægyptia, Æthiopia et Phoenicia.*

IX.7) *Observationes in Iliadem et Odysseam præsertim antiquitates et mytologiam spectantes.*

X.1) *Collectanea ad antiquitates sepulchrales.*

X.2) *Apographum Orphei ex edit. J.M. Gesneri, cum observationibus et lectt. varr. e codd. Biblioth. Neapol., Venet., Florent., etc. excerptis.*

X.3) *Collectanea originem variarum gentium illustrantia, quibus inest commentatio inscripta:* *Congettura sull' origine dei Volsci.

X.4) *Collectanea ad res Ægyptiacas pertinentia.*

X.5) *Excerpta et observationes ad artis scribendi originem imprimis apud Ægyptios etc.*

XI.1) *Apographum Hesiodi Theogoniæ et Operum, cum observationibus criticis et mythologicis.*

XI.2) *Loca ex Hesiodi carminibus excerpta, cum multis annotationibus.*

XI.3) *Apographa tam integrarum Æschyli, Sophoclis et Euripidis, fabularum, quam odarum Pindari, cum scholiorum excerptis etc.*

XII) *Fasciculi novem, excerpta e recentioribus plerumque auctoribus, ut Chandlero, Caylo, Visconti etc., qui de monumentis antiquitatis egerunt, continentes. Insunt præterea inter alia notatu digna* (cf. *Koesii Catal.*), *Adumbratio Vitæ Ciceronis et tabula in æs incisa, vas Corinthiacum, ab Edw. Dodwello repertum, exhibens.*

XIII.1) *Diarium itineris Roma Hafniam et retro facti* Agosto 1776–11 Maggio 1782.

XIII.2) *Diarium itineris Ratisbona Florentiam facti* Marzo 26–Giugno 7. 1780.

XIII.3) *Diarium itineris Roma Venetias et retro facti* Lugl. 3–Settemb. 9. 1789 (*omnia italice scripta*).

XIII.4) **Prælectiones super mythologiam græcam, lingua germanica scriptæ.*

XIII.5) *Collectanea ad literaturæ græcæ et romanæ chronologiam.*

XIII.6) *Observationes de monumentis antiquis Herculani et Pompeis terra erutis.*

XIII.7) *Observationes ad artis monumenta ægyptiaca eorumque epochas.*

XIII.8) *Excerpta ex antiquis scriptoribus præsertim ad mythologiam Deorum et Heroum pertinentia.*

XIII.9) *Epistolæ Zoegæ et aliorum de monumentis gothicis, hibernicis et gallicis, quibus adjacent delineations.*

XIV) *Excerpta ex itinerariis maximam partem facta, ad mores, linguam et literaturam gentium extra Europam habitantium illustranda, duobus fasciculis comprehensa*: (1) Fasc. pagg. 1429, *in quibus eminet* (p. 1397–1400) Notizia dal Sig. Graves etc., *i.e. Observationes circa templum Jovis Amm. 1792.*—(2) *Fasc. pagg. 871, notis numeralibus appictis. Imprimis animadversione digna est notitia Cod. Vaticani 3738* [= *Cod. Vat. A; Cod. Ríos*], *de rebus mexicanicis, tam mythologicis quam historicis, italico sermone scripta.*

XV.1) *Catalogi picturarum, quæ exstant Venetiis, Paduæ, et imprimis Romæ, italico et gallico idiomate scripti. Inest* [*Fr.*] *Mülleri pictoris Epistola* (*germ.*) *tabulas ab ipso Romæ pictas recensens.*

XV.2) *Excerpta e Barthélemy* Voyage du jeune Anacharsis.

XV.3) *Excerpta ad historiam Italiæ e* [*Carlo*] *Denina etc.*

XV.4) Annali dell'Impero di Roma; Epoche della storia Romana. *Sunt tabulæ chronologicæ v. historic.*

XV.5) *Excerpta e græcis et romanis scriptoribus.*

XVI) *Fasciculus varii argumenti, in quo particula commentationis latinæ de Memnone ab aliena manu exarata, notanda est.*

XVII) *Indices in Zoegæ Excerpta, 5 thecis comprehensi.*[21]

21 A section XVIII, absent from Koës' catalogue, was established in The Royal Library for Zoëga's Egyptological correspondence, later moved to NKS 1585 fol.

CHAPTER 2

Relics of a Friendship. Objects from Georg Zoëga's Estate in Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen

Kristine Bøggild Johannsen

The learned Danish scholar Georg Zoëga passed away on 10 February 1809 after ten days of illness. In a letter to the Danish diplomat Baron Herman Schubart written on that very day his doctor, Heinrich Kohlrausch, described the course of the fatal attack of fever in detail. After his thorough account of the patient's condition Kohlrausch remarks:

> He [*scil*. Zoëga] was surrounded here by love and respect; frequently and for hours during his illness he saw his fellow-countrymen and friends, who from the first moment of the danger did not leave his side. Mr. Thorvaldsen was constantly with him (. . .).[1]

As is evident from this and several other accounts of the course of events, the close friend and *protégé* of Zoëga, the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, stayed with the critically ill scholar until the last and later played a central role in winding up the estate.[2] That Thorvaldsen took his mask very shortly

* I would like to thank the editors warmly for encouraging me to contribute to the proceedings, although I was unable to attend the conference. Also, I would like to thank Museum Director Stig Miss, Senior Research Fellow Kira Kofoed, PhD Fellow Thomas Christiansen and Honorary Archivist Patricia Usick for their support and precious comments. Any mistakes are, of course, entirely my own.

1 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, v, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur), letter n. 1265. See also N. Schow, *En Beretning om afdöde Professor og Ridder Georg Zoega's Liv og Fortienester, især med Hensyn til ældre Litteratur, Archæologie og afbildende Kunster*, (Kiöbenhavn: Videnskabernes Selskabs, 1809), 62–63. Please note that this and all of the following quotations have been translated into English.

2 For instance Schow, *En Beretning om afdöde*, 62; F.G. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben. Sammlung seiner Briefe und Beurtheilung seiner Werke*, II, (Stuttgart – Tübingen: in der J.G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1819), 417; J.M. Thiele, *Thorvaldsen i Rom. 1805–1819*, I, (Kiøbenhavn: C.A. Reitzel, 1851), 120. The nature of the friendship between Zoëga and Thorvaldsen has been described elsewhere and will not be dealt with here; see e.g. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben*, 405–406; A. Michaelis, "Thorvaldsen und Zoega", *ZBildK* 14 (1903), 193–196; A.D. Jørgensen, *Georg*

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after his death also confirms the sculptor's presence by the death's bed.[3] It is little known, however, that a considerable number of objects from the estate ended up in Thorvaldsen's possession and later entered into the collections of Thorvaldsens Museum in Copenhagen. The material has never been studied thoroughly, and the provenance of the individual items has in many cases not been established until now.[4] In this light, it is the ambition of this chapter to present a comprehensive account (available in its full extent online)[5] of the objects and to discuss how and why they came into Thorvaldsen's possession.

The Fate of Zoëga's Estate

As appears from various letters and accounts of the course of events, immediately after the death of Zoëga Thorvaldsen and his compatriot Baron Brown took measures to secure any valuables left in the estate of the deceased in order to ensure the inheritance for the three surviving children, Laura, Federico, and Mimma.[6] The priceless manuscripts were sealed up and handed over to Baroness Caroline von Humboldt for safekeeping, while a large unexpected sum of *c.* 3000 *Scudi* was deposited in the care of the banker Saverio Schultheis, with whom both Zoëga and Thorvaldsen had previously had dealings.[7] In his reply (20 February 1809) to an earlier letter from Thorvaldsen (15 February 1809) Schubart approved of the measures taken, which also reflected the requirements stated in his own letter of 17 February 1809, in which, in his capacity as envoy to the Royal Danish Court, he appointed Thorvaldsen

Zoega. Et Mindeskrift, (København: Bianco Lunos Kgl. Hof-Bogtrykkeri, 1881), esp. 200–211; F. Thomasson, *The Life of J.D. Åkerblad. Egyptian Decipherment and Orientalism in Revolutionary Times*, (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013), 181.

3 The death mask is today in Thorvaldsens Museum, inv. n. L653.

4 Melander, for instance, only mentions a minor selection of the engravings that certainly derive from Zoëga's estate; see T. Melander, *Thorvaldsens antikker. En temmelig udvalgt samling*, (København: Thorvaldsens Museum, 1993), 79–93.

5 See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/articles/relics-of-a-friendship.

6 Thorvaldsen to Schubart, probably 15 February 1809. The letter is lost, but is reproduced in Thiele, *Thorvaldsen i Rom*, I, 120–121. See also Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letter n. 1266a; *The Thorvaldsens Museum Archives* (THMA), http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/ThielesExcerpter,1809,nr.60. Brown to Thorvaldsen, after 18 February 1810. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gmI, nr.102.

7 The large sum is not mentioned in the quoted fragment, but see Thiele, *Thorvaldsen i Rom*, I, 122–123. See for instance THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21806, nr.13 for Thorvaldsen's and Zoëga's dealings with Schultheis.

and Brown as curators of the estate to ensure that the valuable manuscripts did not "fall into the thieving hands of the local authority".[8] In order to gain an overview of the manuscripts Schubart invited the young Danish philologist Georg Koës, of whom Zoëga thought highly, to go over the material and make a detailed inventory and classification with the aim of offering the material to The National Royal Library.[9] Koës, who was staying in Naples at the time, accepted the proposal, and Schubart wrote to Thorvaldsen and asked him to have the manuscripts brought to his apartment, which Schubart hoped he would place at Koës' disposal:

> The reason I believe it is better that this investigation takes place in your house is partly that you can easily use one of your rooms for this purpose, while on the other hand it might be of inconvenience to the Baroness; and partly because the good Koës, constantly in the company of yourself or our compatriot Hoyer, would be shouldering less responsibility. Furthermore, when I know that this valuable trunk is in your care, as one of the appointed curators, I feel safer.[10]

Baron Brown was asked to go through Zoëga's correspondence and accounts to find possible unpaid receipts and claims for the *c*. 3000 *Scudi*, while it appears to have befallen Thorvaldsen to manage the sale of furniture and other personal items.[11] The settlement of the estate and other related matters appear to have consumed much of Thorvaldsen's time in the following months,[12] and

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8 Schubart to Thorvaldsen, 17 February 1809. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/documents/m21809,nr.3; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letter n. 1266b. See also Schow, *En Beretning om afdöde*, 64.

9 Schubart to Thorvaldsen, 20 February 1809. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21809,nr.4; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letter n. 1267b. On the motivation for asking Koës to make an inventory of the manuscripts, see also Schow, *En Beretning om afdöde*, 64; Welcker, *Zoega's Leben*, II, 419.

10 Schubart to Thorvaldsen, 10 March 1809. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21809,nr.6; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letter n. 1267b.

11 Schubart to Thorvaldsen, 3 March 1809. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21809,nr.5; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, n. letter 1267a.

12 See for instance THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21809,nr.8; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gmI,nr.118; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gmI,nr.119; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/

the final account of his transactions and expenses (fig. 2.1) was only sent to Schubart two years later.[13]

The detailed account confirms what is already known: 1) that a large sum of 3316 *Scudi* and 27 *Bajocci* was deposited in the care of the banker Schultheis; and 2) that the manuscripts were handed over to Koës. It does, however, add new information about the sale of Zoëga's personal items. The following items are listed: silver spoons (17.50 *Scudi*), books (estimated at 136 *Scudi*, but only bringing in 56 *Scudi*),[14] two razors (1 *Scudo*), medals (8 *Scudi*), the manuscripts for Zoëga's *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma* (In Roma: presso Francesco Bourlié, 1808) bought by the publisher (30 *Scudi*), and furniture (30 *Scudi*). The income from the sale along with another, smaller amount made it possible for Thorvaldsen to cover Zoëga's children's expenses, which are accounted for in detail, in the first months after the death of their father.[15] However, the great number of objects that evidently came into Thorvaldsen's possession is mentioned neither in this account nor in any of the other preserved letters.

A Brief Presentation of the Objects

The recent studies of the material have revealed that at least 427, but very likely more than 500 objects formerly belonging to Zoëga—somehow—came

gmI,nr.123; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gm1,nr.108; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gm1,nr.114; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gm1,nr.110; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gm1,nr.115; http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gmI,nr.111. Apart from the above-mentioned activities, Thorvaldsen was also involved in the planning of the wedding of Zoëga's eldest daughter, Laura, to a young French artist. However, the wedding was never realized. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21809,nr.12; Thiele, *Thorvaldsen i Rom*, I, 133.

13 See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m28,nr.40; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letter n. 1269c. Thorvaldsen's biographer, Thiele, believed that the undated letter was written in the summer of 1809 and interpreted the content in this light. See Thiele, *Thorvaldsen i Rom*, I, 142–143. Another letter from Kohlrausch to Alessandro Visconti, dated 13 March 1813, reveals that in subsequent years, too, Thorvaldsen continued to be involved in matters relating to Zoëga's estate. See Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Autografi Ferrajoli, Rac. Visconti, n. 3909.

14 Friis Johansen noted that Zoëga possessed few books. See K. Friis Johansen, "Georg Zoëga og Rom", in *Rom og Danmark gennem Tiderne*, redigeret af L. Bobé, (København: Levin & Munksgaard, 1935), 248. His source is, unfortunately, not indicated.

15 Several of these items correspond to the receipts listed in n. 9.

into Thorvaldsen's possession.[16] The material is dominated by drawings and engravings, but also includes books, antiquities, plaster casts, and possibly also manuscripts. It can roughly be divided into two overall groups: I) objects with a clear provenance, e.g. books with dedications, original drawings for his publications as well as drawings and/or engravings with his handwritten comments; and II) objects with a more ambiguous provenance, but which because of their nature, motifs and other characteristics in all likelihood also derive from the estate.

In the first group several clusters of items stand out: a) 270 original drawings and one set of specimen proofs of Zoëga's unpublished manuscript on gems and amulets in the Museo Borgiano (cat. I.57, I.84); b) 11 original drawings and specimen proofs for Zoëga's *De origine et usu obeliscorum ad Pium Sextum pontifex maximum* (Romae: typis Lazzarinii Typographi Cameralis, 1797) (cat. I.3–4, I.6, I.58–64, I.141); c) 58 drawings and engravings sent to Zoëga by the British antiquarian Thomas Ford Hill (cat. I.12–33, I.50–56, I.78–83, I.93–115);[17] d) 35 engravings of artefacts in the Museo Borgiano (cat. I.116–148); e) 20 original drawings and engravings of Egyptian artefacts in the collection of the Venetian senator and antiquarian Angelo Quirini (cat. I.34–45, I.85–92);[18] f) 6 plates and 7 specimen proofs for the publication *Monumenta Artis Ægyptiæ in Museo Naniano Venetiis* sent to Zoëga by the Venetian antiquarian Giacomo Nani (fig. 2.2, cat. I.65–77);[19] and g) two original drawings for Zoëga's *pamflet* on the cult of Mithras (fig. 2.3, cat. I.1–2)—possibly made by Thorvaldsen himself. Apart from the original drawings of gems and amulets (a), which obviously belong to the manuscript, today in The National Royal Library (NKS 357b fol., III), a good part of the remaining drawings and engravings are mentioned in the correspondence also preserved in the library; a fact indicating that the material in Thorvaldsens Museum was originally part of the same body of material. The comments that can be observed on several of the pieces range from brief entries such as numbers (e.g. cat. I.57) and factual information about size and material (e.g. cat. I.44) to comments about modern restorations (e.g. cat. I.85), the quality of the hieroglyphs (e.g. cat. I.8) and the provenance of the objects (e.g. cat. I.33). Three books, either dedicated to Zoëga or bearing his signature (cat. I.156–158), and a Greek red-figure cup by the Penthesilea Painter furnished with the signature "Zoëga" written in pencil below one handle (cat. I.155), are also worth noting.

16 See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/articles/relics-of-a-friendship.

17 See in this volume Patricia Usick.

18 See in this volume Daniela Picchi.

19 Ibid.

Zoëga acted as an agent on several occasions and procured various antiquities (especially coins) for the Danish King and other collectors such as his dear friend the Danish bishop and antiquarian Friedrich Münter.[20] The list of the income from the sale of his personal items also mentions "medals", suggesting that he owned a (small?) coin collection, but there appear to be no other references to antiquities in his possession.[21] If the cup originally was among Zoëga's belongings, it is quite likely that it was not the only antique object inherited by Thorvaldsen. Several artefacts in Thorvaldsen's collection of antiquities reflect Zoëga's scholarly interests (e.g. so-called Abraxas gems and Egyptian amulets) and could very well have been taken over from him. This is difficult to prove, however, as none of these artefacts has a signature or other information about its acquisition.

The second group of objects is dominated by 49 plaster casts of Egyptian obelisks. Like the above-mentioned cup, the plaster casts do not appear in any of the accounts of the estate. This is surprising in view of the large number of casts, many of which are of a considerable size. As has recently been convincingly suggested,[22] the first group of casts must have been made between 1788 and 1789; that is between the time when Pope Pius VI suggested that Zoëga should write the history of the obelisks and the erection of the first of the obelisks represented. They could in other words very well have been made as study-objects for Zoëga; a theory supported by the fact that few of the casts appear in other collections. Given the circumstance that Thorvaldsen first arrived in Rome several years later (8 March 1797) and that the casts are of obelisks prominently featured in Zoëga's *De origine et usu obeliscorum*, the obvious thought occurs that Thorvaldsen could have inherited the casts from the scholar.

How and Why the Objects Came into Thorvaldsen's Possession

Although many questions about how the objects ended up among Thorvaldsen's possessions must remain unanswered, studies of the objects and the correspondence of the parties involved nevertheless bring us a little closer to an

20 For instance THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/ea0700; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letters nn. 1102, 1106, 1108, 1134, 1151, 1161, 1174, 1229, 1250; Schow, *En Beretning om afdöde*, 65–68.

21 Melander, *Thorvaldsens antikker*, 79.

22 T. Christiansen, "The reliefs from the obelisks", in *Thorvaldsen's Collection of Casts after the Antique and Early Modern Period*, J. Zahle *et al.*, (Copenhagen: Thorvaldsens Museum, forthcoming).

answer. We shall probably never know whether the items were bequeathed by Zoëga—a plausible scenario, in fact—or whether Thorvaldsen was acting on his own initiative. If the latter was the case, it would have been easy for him to go through the material and select the items of interest to him once the valuable manuscripts (and possibly also other documents) had been brought from the home of Baroness von Humboldt to his apartment in the via Sistina. It is uncertain whether other personal belongings of Zoëga came to the apartment too. But as the person responsible for the sale of the objects Thorvaldsen would have had rich opportunities to choose from the material. Regardless of the course of events, however, it is a safe assumption that the items had been removed from the estate by the time Koës made his inventory (presumably begun around 10 March 1809), as they do not appear on the list.[23] That very few people—if any except Thorvaldsen—knew about the items in his possession is confirmed not only by the absence of any mention in the surviving correspondence and in the above-mentioned inventory, but also by the fact that Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker regretted the loss of several of these drawings in his Zoëga biography, most prominently the drawings of gems and amulets.[24] Had it been commonly known that the items were in Thorvaldsen's possession; this information would certainly have been available to him.

When one looks over the *corpus* of selected items, it is difficult to detect an interest in particular motifs or classes of objects—except perhaps for a predilection for the figurative rather than textual material. The illustrations for the manuscript on gems and amulets may, however, represent an exception, since it is well documented that this class of objects had Thorvaldsen's particular attention,[25] as did the substantial number of items related to the cult of Mithras (fig. 2.2).[26] Then again, this might also be the result of sheer chance. What, then, were Thorvaldsen's motives for keeping the items? The most obvious incentive would have been his great interest in Egyptian art and

23 In a letter to Thorvaldsen Schubart proposes that the documents should be transferred to Thorvaldsen's apartment and adds that Koës was in Rome the same day, 10 March 1809. See THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m21809,nr.6; Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, letter n. 1267b*.

24 Welcker, *Zoega's Leben*, II, 442. See also cat. I.55, I.82 and I.120–133.

25 Thorvaldsen acted as an expert and supervisor on *Impronte gemmarie*, a publication series launched by Instituto di Corrispondenza Archaeologica. On his role, see for instance P. Fossing, *Thorvaldsens Museum. Catalogue of the Antique Engraved Gems and Cameos*, (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag—Oxford University Press, 1929), 14–16.

26 Zoëga's personal copy of *Afhandling om romerske Kunstmonumenter henhörende til den mithraiske Dyrkelse*, (Kiöbenhavn: Videnskabernes Selskabs, 1806), possibly also the handwritten manuscript as well as the original drawings for the publication.

culture,[27] probably first awoken by Zoëga. Over the years this interest resulted in a fairly large collection of 417 Egyptian artefacts, a few plaster casts (in addition to those mentioned above) and several publications on the subject.[28] A large number of Egyptian artefacts were purchased on one occasion in 1826 from his former pupil, the German sculptor Eduard Schmidt von der Launitz.[29] Thorvaldsen, however, appears to have been collecting Egyptian items over an extended period.[30] His keen interest in the study of ancient Egypt was shared by several of his friends and acquaintances such as the Swedish Orientalist J.D. Åkerblad,[31] the German diplomat August Kestner,[32] the British poet

27 For example the instances pointed out by his close friend, the German diplomat August Kestner and by the Swedish painter Wilhelm Ahlborn; see A. Kestner, *Römische Studien*, (Berlin: Verlag der Deckerschen Geheimen Ober-Hofbüchlerei, 1850), 150; I. Magnussen, *Des Malers Wilhelm Ahlborn Lebensschicksale: von Wilhelm Ahlborn selbst erzählt*, (Oldenburg: Albertus-Magnus-Verlag, 1935), 102.

28 For a general introduction to the Egyptian collection, see L. Müller, *Musée-Thorvaldsen. Antiquités*, III, (Copenhague: imprimerie de Freres Berling, 1847), 3–43; Melander, *Thorvaldsens antikker*, 79–93; M.L. Buhl, *L'Art statuaire égyptien au Musée Thorvaldsen*, (Copenhague: Musée Thorvaldsen, 2000), 7–12. For Thorvaldsen's cast collection, see L. Müller, *Description des platres au Musée Thorvaldsen*, (Copenhague: imprimerie de Freres Berling, 1851), esp. 3, 26–29; J. Zahle, *Thorvaldsens afstøbninger efter antikken og renæssancen*, (København: Thorvaldsens Museum, 2012), esp. 71–75; Zahle, *Thorvaldsen's Collection of Casts*. A few of the casts after Egyptian statuary (inv. nn. L1–L3) have permanently been exhibited ever since the opening of the museum in 1848. For Thorvaldsen's personal library, see L. Müller, *Catalogue des livres et ouvrages d'estampes au Musée-Thorvaldsen*, (Copenhague: imprimerie de Freres Berling, 1850), esp. 9, cat. 73–76.

29 For the Launitz purchase, see THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/gmVIII,nr.2; Melander, *Thorvaldsens antikker*, 79–80, fig. 20; Buhl, *L'Art statuaire*, esp. 7, fig. 1.

30 For other acquisitions of Egyptian artefacts, see THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/m35IV,nr.17; Buhl, *L'Art statuaire*, 7–12; Christiansen, "The reliefs from the obelisks". Thorvaldsen's extensive library contained a substantial number of books on Egyptian art and culture, several of which were dedicated to the sculptor; see for instance THMA http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/dokumenter/M76.

31 It appears that Åkerblad was somewhat sceptical about Thorvaldsen; see above note 2; THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/people/aakerblad-johan-david. Nevertheless, he appears to have acted as an archaeological adviser to the sculptor while working on the Alexander Frieze for the Palazzo Quirinale (1810) and the drawings of the Processional Frieze in Persepolis (inv. n. D1154–1155); and other Persian monuments (inv. nn. D1156–1157) in Thorvaldsens Museum might very well derive from him. For Åkerblad's role as adviser to Thorvaldsen, see Thomasson, *The Life of J.D. Åkerblad*, 367–370.

32 Kestner, *Römische Studien*, 150; C.E. Loeben, *Die Ägypten-Sammlung des Museum August Kestner und ihre (Kriegs-)Verluste*, (Rahden – Westf.: Marie Leidorf, 2011), 41–59.

Samuel Rogers[33] and the Greek art dealer Demetrios Papandriopulos, better known as Giovanni d'Athanasi.[34] He even met the French Egyptologist Jean-François Champollion, who cracked the code of the hieroglyphs, on at least one occasion.[35] A secondary, but hardly less important motive must have been a wish to retain the objects that reminded him of his dear friend and teacher—as relics of a lost friendship.

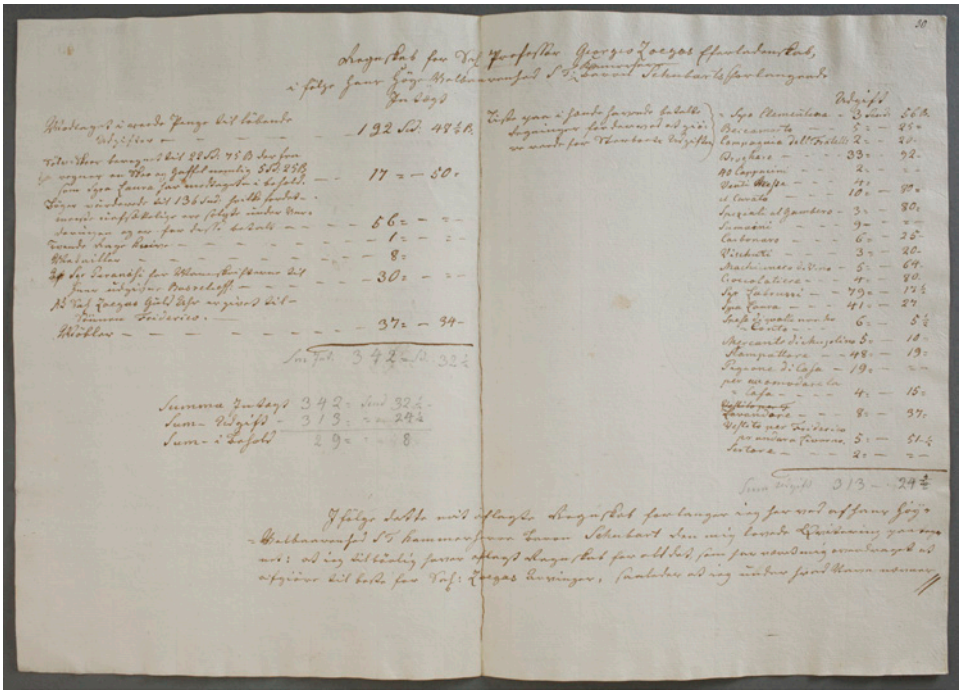

FIGURE 2.1 *Excerpt of Thorvaldsen's final account of his transactions and expenses in connection with the winding up of Zoëga's estate, most likely sent to the Danish diplomat Herman Schubart in the spring of 1811.*

33 THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/people/rogers-samuel; Christiansen, "The reliefs from the obelisks".

34 THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/people/papandriopulo-demetrio; Buhl, *L'Art statuaire*, 7–12; Christiansen, "The reliefs from the obelisks".

35 THMA, http://arkivet.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/people/champollion-jean-francois?; H. Hartleben, *Champollion. Sein Leben und sein Werk*, I, (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1906), 557; Christiansen, "The reliefs from the obelisks".

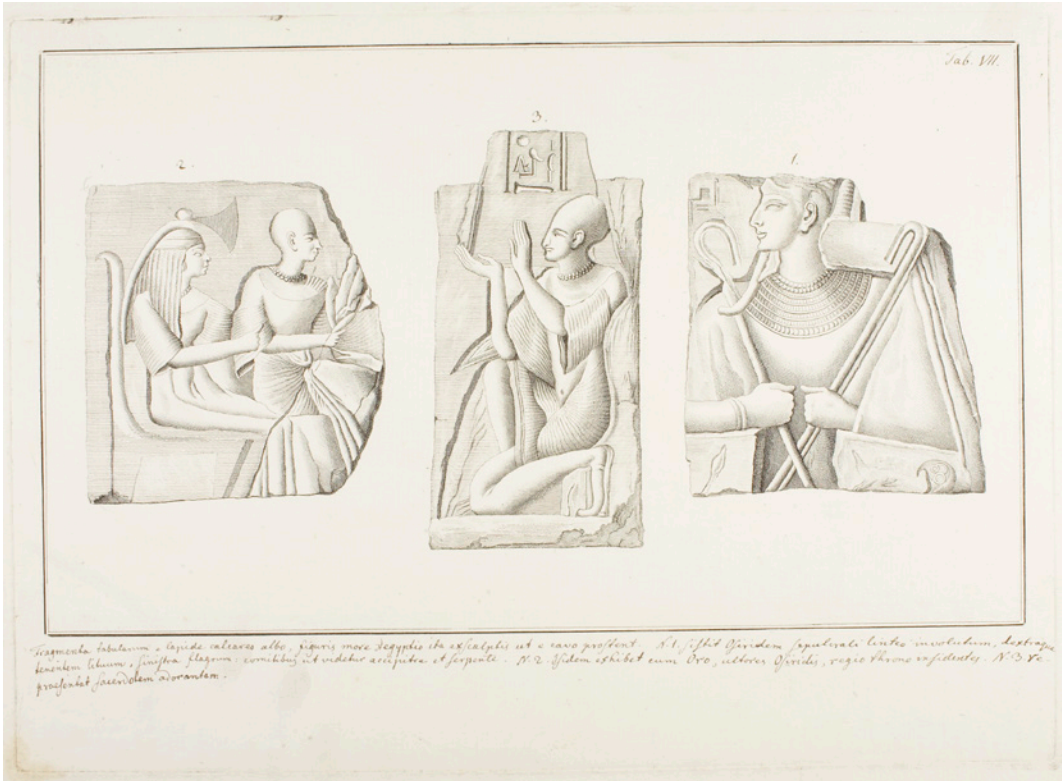

FIGURE 2.2 *Specimen proof for the publication* Monumenta Artis Ægyptiæ in Musæo Naniano Veneteiis *rendering three fragments of Egyptian reliefs one of which is today in Bologna. Below, Zoëga has in brown ink written comments to the fragments. See in this volume also Daniela Picchi.*

FIGURE 2.3 *Drawing of a statue of Aeon, discovered in 1798 by Robert Fagan, today in the Musei Vaticani. The drawing, which according to an epithet in the lower right corner, was done by Thorvaldsen for Zoëga, may very likely have served as model for one of the plates in Zoëga's* Afhandling om romerske Kunstmonumenter henhörende til den mithraiske Dyrkelse (*Copenhagen: Videnskabernes Selskab, 1806*).

CHAPTER 3

Georg Zoëga in lettere

Karen Ascani

Zoëga aveva una innata predisposizione per le lingue. Essendo cresciuto nello Jutland meridionale, oltre alla lingua danese conosceva perfettamente il tedesco. Infatti, redigeva sempre in questa lingua la sua corrispondenza con la famiglia. Poiché dal 1783 fino alla morte nel 1809 vivrà a Roma, l'italiano diventa per lui la terza lingua che acquisisce rapidamente. Zoëga si esprimeva poi correntemente in francese e in inglese, e la sua formazione classica gli permetteva di leggere e scrivere il latino e il greco.

A ciò si aggiunge la sua conoscenza della lingua copta. Grazie alle ricche collezioni del cardinale Stefano Borgia (1731–1804) egli ha potuto avere a disposizione numerosi frammenti in lingua copta tali da permettergli di elaborare un catalogo suddiviso nei vari dialetti. Per molto tempo questo volume è stato un essenziale punto di riferimento per chiunque intendesse occuparsi di letteratura copta.[1]

Infine vanno ricordati i suoi studi sui geroglifici a cui si dedica nel desiderio di risalire alle origini della cultura greca e romana. Zoëga era certo sulla buona strada per riscoprire la chiave di lettura della lingua egiziana, in quanto esclude l'approccio esoterico ai geroglifici che sino allora aveva dominato gli studi della civiltà egizia, preparando così la strada a Champollion. Ne abbiamo un esempio nella sua interpretazione di un papiro memfitico che gli viene sottoposto, e dopo averlo esaminato dichiara che si tratta non di un documento cultuale, bensì di un calendario per la regolazione e la distribuzione delle acque del Nilo.[2]

L'uso che fa della lingua materna, il tedesco, è fin dalla sua gioventù molto articolato. Del suo secondo viaggio in Italia, quello in cui accompagna il giovane Albrecht Christopher von Heinen, sono conservate fra le altre una serie di lettere che scrisse al suo amico Christian Hieronymus Esmarch (1752–1820). Queste lettere costituiscono complessivamente un diario che ci permette di seguire le tappe del suo viaggio attraverso l'Europa. Esse contengono inoltre

1 Vedi in questo volume l'articolo di Paola Buzi.

2 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), in particolare II, 158, lettera n. 338 del 5 gennaio 1788. Vedi in questo volume l'articolo di Paul J. Frandsen.

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diverse considerazioni filosofiche che rivelano la particolare sensibilità che contraddistingueva il suo carattere, sensibilità che emerge anche dalla sua attenzione alla natura. Figlio del Romanticismo, egli amava fare lunghe passeggiate in luoghi isolati. In una lettera a Esmarch da Kerteminde in Fionia del 9 marzo 1779 egli descrive così una passeggiata che usava fare al crepuscolo in un bosco delle vicinanze:[3]

> *Abends*. Eben komme ich zurück von einer Wallfahrt nach dem Grabhügel der drey Jungfrauen. Wenn's dunkelt ist der Ort recht schaudrig. Zu innerst tief im Walde bepflanzt mit grauen hinsterbenden Eichen, und in ihren Wipfeln das Rauschen der Abendwinde wie Geisterschaaren. Und weil's so abgewandt ist halten sich viele Adler da auf; nur der dumpfe Schlag ihrer mächtigen Flügel, wenn sie vom Kliffe herauffahren, und ihre heischern Stimmen durch die öde Einsamkeit. Es müste eine Freude seyn da zu übernachten unter all den Schauern. Und wenn man nun einmal dahin gestimt ist, wie jedes rasselnde Blatt uns aufschauen macht, dünkt uns jeder moosigte Baum eine Wundergestalt, und sein Knarren am Winde die leidende Stimme eines gebannten Geistes. (. . .)

Segue poi una descrizione vivace di questa fiaba delle tre vergini che si sono fatte rinchiudere nella collina per sfuggire a dei giganti che sono arrivati per pretendere la loro mano.

L'attenzione di Zoëga verso la natura si evidenzia anche in un'altra descrizione, questa volta dall'Italia. Essa è contenuta in una lettera che scrive, sempre al suo amico Esmarch, da Napoli nel dicembre 1780:[4]

> Einen Theil des Oktobers ehe wir Rom verliessen brachte ich in Tivoli zu, einige der glücklichsten Tage meines Lebens. Ich kann Dir die Schönheit des Orts nicht beschreiben, es ist einer von den auserwählten auf Erden, und in der herrlichen Jahres Zeit—O was der Herbst in Italien ist!—wenn jeder Baum eine Vorrathskammer ist, die Granate qvellend mit dem kühlendsten Saft, geschmückt mit den lieblichsten Farben, am schwanken Ast sich hinabwiegt gegen die neugrünende Erde, der Öhlbaum schüttelt sein schweres Haupt, und die Traube lockend herblickt von den schwelgenden Lauben (. . .).

3 Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, I, (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), 151–152, lettera n. 99.

4 Ibid., 218, lettera n. 131.

Simili descrizioni della natura ricorrono qua e là in altre lettere che Zoëga negli anni giovanili invia ad amici e parenti. In molte si denota la propensione caratteristica del suo tempo a soffermarsi sugli effetti notturni. Così, quando nell'agosto del 1783 egli si trasferisce in una casa in piazza della Rotonda a Roma, in una lettera al padre sottolinea la bellezza del luogo quando di notte la luna si alza sul monumento più splendido e meglio conservato di Roma.[5]

Ogni tanto si lancia in considerazioni politiche relative agli stati che attraversa, ad esempio parla dei sistemi politici del governo del Piemonte, della Repubblica di Venezia e così via. Queste descrizioni già denotano l'approccio analitico che sarà un tratto distintivo delle sue ricerche.

Il momento forse decisivo nella vita di Zoëga è senz'altro la conoscenza che fece di Maria, sua futura moglie (1765–1807), figlia del pittore Giacomo Petruccioli (c. 1738–?), e la sua conversione al cattolicesimo. A questa decisione segue una corrispondenza con il padre in cui si sforza di motivare la sua scelta. È consapevole delle riserve con cui il padre, pastore protestante, accoglierà la notizia del suo matrimonio e della sua conversione, tanto che gliela comunica a distanza di tempo. La sensibilità da lui usata in questa circostanza rivela da una parte la comprensione che nutre per le preoccupazioni del padre, dall'altra la sua determinazione nel rimanere coerente con la sua decisione. Lo esprime in tedesco con queste sentite parole contenute in una lettera al padre del 4 dicembre 1784:[6]

> (…) Die Folgen davon in Copenhagen sind mir gleichgültig; nur Sie, bester Vater, wünschte ich beruhigt. Mein Schritt ist mit keinen Umständen verknüpft gewesen, die mir Schande oder Vorwürfe zuziehen könnten, u. hat mich nur einmal gereut, als ich in Paris mich von Allen verlassen fürchtete, mehr besorgt war für die Person deren Schiksal mit dem meinigen verknüpft war, als für mich selbst.

La corrispondenza con il suo amico Esmarch è caratterizzata da una intimità e una spontaneità che in altre raramente si trova. Si scrivono normalmente in tedesco, ma ad un certo punto Zoëga decide di voler redigere le sue lettere in danese essendo stanco di tutto ciò che è tedesco.[7] La corrispondenza con Esmarch subirà una lunga interruzione di 17 anni per essere ripresa, di nuovo in tedesco, soltanto nel 1801 in occasione della sua nomina a professore presso l'Università di Kiel. Le lettere di questo periodo trattano ora prevalentemente

5 Ibid., 316, lettera n. 198.

6 Ibid., 375, lettera n. 237.

7 Ibid., 315, lettera n. 197.

delle preoccupazioni di Zoëga, delle sue difficoltà economiche, dei suoi problemi nel mandare avanti la famiglia. Il rapporto di profonda amicizia non è per nulla incrinato e l'immediatezza con cui Zoëga si rivolge a Esmarch è la stessa degli anni precedenti, soltanto il contenuto è cambiato.

Il tenore stilistico dell'epistolario di Zoëga con gli anni si modificherà, lo riconosce egli stesso. In una lettera del 1807 egli riflette sul suo scrivere, poichè ha la sensazione che il suo stile con gli anni si stia inaridendo per il continuo occuparsi di materie scientifiche. In questa lettera rivolge al destinatario, Georg von Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1779–1860), un vivo ringraziamento per la bontà da questi mostrata nei suoi confronti, ed aggiunge:

> Daß min Herz kalt oder karg wäre mögte ich nicht gerne glauben, aber meinen Worten fehlt es an Wärme und Reichthum. Eben selbst dieses Gelehrtenwesen, wo man meist mit dem Publicum spricht oder zu sprechen glaubt, macht es einem zur Gewohnheit die Worte zu calculiren und zu wägen, nur zom Verstande, nicht zum Herzen zu sprechen: gerade das Gegentheil von dem was man in Briefen seyn solte. Ich habe mich in der Rücksicht sonst wol über mich selbst geärgert, aber ich sehe daß es auch andern so geht und halte es mir so eher zu gute. Ich finde bey meinen Freunden daß je mehr sie ins Gelehrtseyn hineinkommen, je kahler werden ihre Briefe, und daß ich doch darum nicht an ihre Gesinnungen zweifeln darf.[8]

Non mi soffermo ulteriormente sull'uso della lingua tedesca. Desidero illustrare invece brevemente la scioltezza stilistica della sua corrispondenza in lingua francese. Un esempio significativo ed eloquente l'abbiamo nello scambio di lettere che tenne dal 1805 con il diplomatico danese Herman Schubart (1756–1832). È interessante notare che esso è tenuto per lo più in francese salvo quando si tratta di affari. Le lettere che scrive a Schubart sono caratterizzate da una freschezza che smentisce l'affermazione citata sopra. A lui Zoëga confessa le sue inquietudini in una lingua che qualche volta assume anche un carattere colloquiale. Così, in una lettera del 21 agosto 1805,[9] dopo aver raccontato degli sforzi per acquistare la collezione numismatica di un certo Bondacca per la collezione reale danese di monete e medaglie, egli scrive delle sue preoccupazioni per la salute della famiglia ed esclama: "J'ai du malheur en tout ce que j'entreprends ou que je me propose, ainsi je crainds fortement que ma villeggiatura évanouira de nouveau. (…)" e più tardi nella stessa lettera aggiunge

8 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, v, 271–272, lettera n. 1209.

9 Ibid., 119 ss., lettera n. 1149.

ragionando sul soggiorno dello scultore danese Thorvaldsen presso gli stessi Schubart nella loro casa di campagna a Montenero vicino a Livorno:

> Vous avez appellé Thorvaldsen chez vous, et j'envie son sort de se trouver dans une situation à pouvoir de tems en tems passer des mois entiers à Votre delicieuse campagne que je ne dois même me flatter de jamais voir. Comme les hommes sans famille sont heureux! Toute la terre est à eux pendant qu'avec femme et enfans on devient *servus glebae* et ne peut plus franchir les bornes du territoire étroit auquel on s'est vendu. Lorsque j'étois garçon il m'embarrassoit moins d'aller de Copenhague à Rome et de Rome à Copenhague, qu'actuellement de faire une gîte à Albano ou Ariccia.

Più tardi, nel settembre del 1805 dà sfogo alla sua rassegnazione nei confronti della sua situazione.[10] Sua moglie soffre di una malattia inguaribile che impedisce alla famiglia di recarsi in villeggiatura nei Castelli Romani e quindi deve accontentarsi di rimanere in città. Il passo che segue offre un raro sguardo sulla sua vita quotidiana: "(…) J'ai d'ailleurs adopté un genre de vie dont déjà je ressens des avantages, et ma fille aussi. Nous feignons d'être à la campagne, nous passons le soir à causer en companie de quelques amis." La confidenza con cui Zoëga scrive a Schubart, viene da questi contraccambiata nella risposta che egli invia il 30 settembre 1805.[11] Egli riprende il concetto di felicità espresso da Zoëga affermando che "Je vous admire mon bon ami d'avoir dejoué la fortune qui n'a pas voulu Vous accorder une Villeggiatura; en croyant etre a la campagne, Vous y etes; car on est ce qu'on croit etre. (…)" E Schubart continua con riflessioni sul contenuto della lettera di Zoëga nel suo caratteristico stile leggermente barocco.

Il tenore diretto e franco che caratterizza lo scambio di lettere con Schubart, vale anche laddove Zoëga racconta di vicende relative alla sua professione. Nel luglio del 1806 egli descrive del riordinamento in corso in quegli anni dei Musei Vaticani:

> En attendant le graveur Capperoni[12] a entrepris de faire dessiner et graver le musèe Chiaramonti et de le publier sur le même pied du musée Pieclementin; et pour l'explication des monuments il a engagé

10 Ibid., 129, lettera n. 1152.

11 Ibid., 132, lettera n. 1153.

12 Gaspare Capperoni (1756–1808).

> M. Visconti[13] très bon libraire et fourni de beaucoup de connoissances mais depourvu d'érudition classique, et M. Guattani[14] antiquaire très ignorant et écrivain abominable. Il faut que M. Capperoni compte beaucoup sur la bêtise des acheteurs de livres. (…)[15]

Per quanto riguarda Zoëga e la lingua danese, come avevo accennato sopra, non è la sua lingua madre. Evidentemente prova una forma di incertezza di fronte allo scriverla, almeno nei primi anni dopo essersi stabilito a Roma, tanto che al gran ciambellano Johan von Bülow (1751–1828) il 17 maggio 1788 confessa di aver dovuto compiere uno sforzo per redigere in lingua danese una lettera di ringraziamento al principe al trono Frederik (1768–1839)[16]—si tratta di un ringraziamento dovuto poiché il principe gli aveva concesso un onorario per la stesura di relazioni concernenti fra l'altro opere sulle antichità che dovessero essere pubblicate in Italia.[17] Questi rapporti sono redatti in tedesco, mentre un'altra serie di relazioni sullo stato delle arti a Roma inviate al presidente della Reale Accademia di Belle Arti a Copenaghen, il principe ereditario Frederik (1753–1805), sono redatte in danese. Lo stesso vale per i rapporti che dal 1800 al 1802 nella sua veste di console danese egli redige per la Camera di Commercio danese sul commercio dello Stato Pontificio.

In verità non posso non ammirare la disinvoltura con cui Zoëga passa da una lingua ad un'altra, per non parlare della confidenza che ben presto acquisisce con la lingua italiana. Il carteggio contiene numerose lettere redatte in questa lingua, ma non sono la maggioranza. L'esempio più illustrativo al riguardo è, a mio parere, la corrispondenza che teneva con il cardinale Stefano Borgia durante i suoi brevi soggiorni fuori Roma. Mi riferisco soprattutto alle lettere che inviò al Cardinale dal viaggio da lui compiuto a Parigi nel 1784 e dai suoi soggiorni di studio rispettivamente a Napoli e a Venezia nel 1789. Alcune lettere all'amico Friedrich Münter (1761–1830) sono anch'esse redatte in italiano, spesso scritte lo stesso giorno in cui scriveva ad altri in italiano,[18] a conferma della confidenza che aveva con questa lingua. Accade anche che inizia una

13 Filippo Aurelio Visconti (1754–1831).

14 Giuseppe Antonio Guattani (1748–1830).

15 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, v, 195 ss., lettera n. 1179.

16 Ibid., II, 165, lettera n. 345.

17 Ibid., 160, lettera n. 341.

18 Vedi ad esempio ibid., lettere nn. 405–406 del 5 settembre 1789 e nn. 434–435 del 28 novembre 1789.

lettera scrivendo in danese a Münter per poi ad un certo punto continuarla in italiano o viceversa.[19]

La sua padronanza della lingua italiana emerge già da una lunga lettera che in viaggio verso Parigi invia da Livorno al Cardinale nel marzo del 1784:[20]

> Gia la prima lettera che mi do l'onore d'indirizzarle, mi fa comparire mancator di parole. Non Le mando niente di quanto avevo promesso, neppure prima di essere in Parigi potrò inviarle nulla. Dopo partito da Roma non posso piu fatigare, una tetra malinconia m'imgombra la mente, mi rende inattivo e di peso a me stesso. L'ho detto sempre: uno non dovrebbe venire a Roma: pur troppo nel caso mio è vero.

Nel mese di luglio del 1789 egli parte per un soggiorno di studio a Venezia dove insieme allo studioso danese Niels Iversen Schow (1754–1830) è stato incaricato di decifrare due codici biblici. Dopo un viaggio da Roma a Firenze non privo di momenti di tensione, giungono a Firenze dove si fermano per alcuni giorni. E da lì Zoëga scrive al suo amico, il professor Johann Philipp Siebenkees (1759–1796):[21]

> Arrivammo qui mercordì mattina, e sino da quel tempo giriamo giorno e mattina per osservare le cose notabili della bella Firenze e per far conoscenza con questi letterati—a dirvela in confidenza, s'annoiano un poco questi buoni Fiorentini, che sempre Vi discorrono di queste loro cose patrie, dei grand'uomini che sono stati tra di loro e di cui è mancata la razza, e di simili temi. pare ch'uno si trovi tra tanti vecchietti, tutti sull'orlo di rimbambire. ma questo per l'amor di Dio, non lo dite a Tanini, in certo modo mi diverte questo spirito, piccolo bensì, ma tuttavia patriottico. disperare mi fanno quando cominciano il discorso delle stampe del quattrocento, grande argomento dei loro trattenimenti eruditi (…).

E più oltre continua: "(…) Lo spirito delle vere ricerche morì qui col Buonarroti,[22] quei che vennero dopo erano anticagliari, adesso sono rigattieri a dirittura." Ma poi finisce la lettera affermando che "Lasciamo Firenze malvolentieri. ci abbiamo ricevuto un mondo di finezze da tutte le parti (…)".

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19 Vedi ad esempio ibid., lettere n. 360 dell'11 ottobre 1788 e n. 381 del 18 aprile 1789.

20 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 324 ss., lettera n. 204 del 29 marzo 1784.

21 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, II, 307 ss., lettera n. 397.

22 Filippo Buonarroti (1661–1733).

Ciò che, secondo me, caratterizza questi brevi passi, evidenzia la particolare capacità di Zoëga di tracciare una circostanza, un profilo, un evento con descrizioni concise di estrema semplicità e rigore. Questi tratti ricorrono spesso anche negli scritti a carattere scientifico e nei rapporti che nel corso degli anni redigerà per la Danimarca.

Il maggiore interesse offerto dall'opera di Zoëga, risiede indubbiamente nel suo valore di documento scientifico, e questo comprende anche il suo carteggio che per molti aspetti ne costituisce una preziosa integrazione. Ma, come ho detto all'inizio, lo si può anche leggere o consultare sia per la ricchezza di notizie sulla sua persona e sulla sua epoca, sia in quanto testimonianza degli stretti rapporti scientifici e personali che allora intercorrevano fra gli studiosi aldilà delle frontiere. Nella sua vasta erudizione rientrano in ogni caso anche le sue capacità nel campo delle lingue, sebbene con il suo caratteristico spirito critico ad un certo punto al suo amico Münter affermi che a poco a poco non ne sa più nessuna correttamente.[23]

23 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, II, 188, lettera n. 355.

CHAPTER 4

Georg Zoëga und Christian Gottlob Heyne

Daniel Graepler

Man hat Georg Zoëga häufig mit Winckelmann verglichen. Kenner von Zoëgas Leben und Werk haben jedoch schon früh darauf hingewiesen, dass der dänische Gelehrte eine ausgesprochen distanzierte Haltung gegenüber seinem vermeintlichen Vorbild einnahm[1] und dass sein wissenschaftlicher Ansatz nicht so sehr durch Winckelmann als vielmehr durch Christian Gottlob Heyne geprägt war. Wie eng die Beziehung zwischen Zoëga und Heyne in der Tat gewesen ist, soll im Folgenden näher beleuchtet werden.

Zoëga als Schüler Heynes

Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) war 1763 als Professor der Poesie und Beredsamkeit nach Göttingen berufen worden und dort sehr rasch durch Übernahme wichtiger Ämter zum einflussreichsten Mitglied des akademischen Lehrkörpers aufgestiegen.[2] Zoëga fühlte sich schon während seines ersten Studienaufenthalts in Göttingen von April 1773 bis zum Sommer 1776 Heyne eng verbunden und belegte bei ihm Vorlesungen über Römische Altertümer, über Griechische Altertümer, über Pindar, über römische Literaturgeschichte und über Homers Odyssee. Doch erst bei seinem zweiten Göttingen-Aufenthalt ab Juli 1779 nahm er auch an Heynes bekanntestem Kolleg teil, das für seine wissenschaftliche Ausrichtung besonders bedeutsam werden sollte: der berühmten Archäologie-Vorlesung. Heyne hielt diese innovative Veranstaltung

1 Kritisch z.B. *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma incisi da Tommaso Piroli colle illustrazioni di Giorgio Zoega*, I, (Roma: presso Francesco Bourlié, 1808), 224.

2 Aus der umfangreichen Literatur über Heyne seien hier nur zitiert: M. Heidenreich, *Christian Gottlob Heyne und die Alte Geschichte*, (München – Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2006); D. Graepler, J. Migl (hrsgg.), *Das Studium des schönen Altertums. Christian Gottlob Heyne und die Entstehung der Klassischen Archäologie*, (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2007); B. Bäbler, H.-G. Nesselrath (hrsgg.), *Christian Gottlob Heyne. Werk und Leistung nach zweihundert Jahren*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Neue Folge 32, (Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter, 2014).

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seit 1767 regelmäßig ab und zog damit schon bald Studenten aus ganz Europa an, da an keiner anderen Universität etwas Vergleichbares geboten wurde.[3]

Einen ersten Hinweis auf Zoëgas Interesse auch an Heynes archäologischen Arbeiten gibt ein Brief Ende 1778:

> Heyne's Lobschrift muß ich haben (...). Kein Mann aus der Klasse den ich so liebe wie Heyne. Das Studium der Kunst ist noch unter allen Dingen die man Wissenschaft nennt dasjenige was mich am meisten interessirt, und kränkt mich oft daß ich das izt ganz muß liegen lassen.[4]

Kurz nach seiner Ankunft in Göttingen schreibt er:

> Hr Heyne will ein grosses Subjekt aus mir machen, wenn's gelingen und's Glück gut seyn will, auch bin ich gewissermaassen willens allen Fleiß anzuwenden. Ich habe mich nämlich freywillig und *motu proprio* bey ihm zum Archäologisten anwerben lassen, doch bin ich noch nicht völlig mit mir selbst einig ob ich als schwerer Cavallerist oder *ad genium seculi* wie Dragoner Dienst thun will. Ich fange izt gleich an sein Collegium zu hören, mitten inne zwar, aber was voran gangen ist muß ein schöpfrischer Geist selbst ersezen; studiere denn Tag und Nacht bis ich alles weis was alle andre gewußt haben, und wenn's nun wiederum von hier weggeht, giebt mir Heyne eine Notiz von den Dingen die ihm noch dunkel sind, die durch den Augenschein entschieden werden müssen, und worüber ich ihm dann neue Nachrichten und Aufklärungen ertheilen soll.[5]

Der Plan wird sogleich in die Tat umgesetzt. Im Juli 1780 berichtet Zoëga aus Rom:

> Ich habe viele Aufträge von Heynen das antiqvarische Studium betreffend, das mir eben sehr heilsam ist, weil ich sonst leicht in Versuchung

3 Vgl. D. Graepler, „Antikenstudium für junge Herren von Stand. Zu Christian Gottlob Heynes archäologischer Lehrtätigkeit", in *Christian Gottlob Heyne*, 75–108.

4 Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, 1, (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), 116, Briefe n. 88.

5 Ibid., 166, Briefe n. 111; vgl. auch ebd. 161, Briefe n. 103: „Unter den Lehrern freue ich mich besonders auf Heynen. Er ist einer von denjenigen Gelehrten, für die ich die allgemeinste Hochachtung habe. So viel klassische Gelehrsamkeit verbunden mit so viel zartem blühenden Gefühl, solch ein scharfer philosophischer Blik mit so viel stillem sanften Geiste, ist gewiß etwas das man überaus selten antrift". Ebd. 165, Briefe n. 110: „Heyne ist der Mann, den ich vor allen andern schäze, u. der einzige bey dem ich hier Collegien zu hören gedenke".

> gerathen könte diese Wissenschaft zu vernachlässigen, die doch eigentlich nirgends recht getrieben werden kann ausser hier (…).[6]

Und an seinen Vater schreibt er ein Jahr später aus Turin, nachdem die geplante große Europareise vorzeitig abgebrochen werden musste:

> Dennoch habe ich Gelegenheit gefunden eine Menge Bemerkungen zu sammeln für Geschichte u. Antiquität, wodurch ich gewiß bin mir meinen Freund Heyne in Göttingen doppelt verbindlich zu machen, auf den ich auch in Rüksicht auf mein künftiges Schiksal rechne.[7]

Auf der Rückreise macht Zoëga im Juli 1781 Station in Göttingen und führt hier wiederum ein für seine weitere wissenschaftliche Orientierung entscheidendes Gespräch mit Heyne. In einem Brief an den Vater fasste er seine bisherigen und zukünftigen Bestrebungen folgendermaßen zusammen:

> Geleitet von Heyne, durch seine Mitarbeitung unterstützt, mußte mirs gelingen, einer noch ungeformten Wissenschaft ihre bestimmte zwekentsprechende Gestalt zu geben, dasjenige was bisher nur schwankendes unfestes Räsonnement gewesen war, in ein sicheres anwendbares und wichtiges Studium zu verwandeln. (…)
>
> Heyne hatte schon lange den Plan entworfen das Studium des Alterthums mit historischer Strenge zu behandeln, u. durch Anwendung auf die Geschichte der Menschheit wichtig zu machen. (…) Er suchte einen jungen Mann in dessen Seele er seine Ideen hineinlegen konnte, dessen Geist dem seinigen zu folgen im Stande wäre, der ungebunden und zugleich Enthusiast genug um seine Kräfte einer Wissenschaft zu widmen, die nur ihrer selbst wegen schäzbar ist, nicht in Rüksicht auf den damit zu machenden Erwerb. Meine erste Reise nach Italien hatte ähnliche Ideen in mir hervorgebracht, wir begegneten uns auf halbem Wege, u. obschon ich mich nicht im Stande glaubte das Ganze auszuführen, auch meine Gedanken zugleich auf andre Dinge gerichtet waren, so versprach ich ihm doch bey Antritt der zweyten Reise so viel zu thun als Lage, Umstände u. andre nicht hintanzusezende Geschäfte erlauben würden.[8]

6 Ibid., 208, Briefe n. 129.

7 Ibid., 225, Briefe n. 133.

8 Ibid., 237f, Briefe n. 138.

Auf Anregung Heynes konzentriert sich Zoëga zunächst auf die Numismatik.[9] Heyne war selbst sehr an Münzen interessiert. Er hatte 1772 für die Gründung eines eigenen Münzkabinetts an der Universität gesorgt und wichtige Aufsätze zur Münzprägung der römischen Republik publiziert.[10] Wie sehr ihn Zoëga auch auf diesem Feld als seinen Mentor betrachtete, bezeugt dessen Brief vom 29.7.1781, in dem er Heyne sein Vorhaben darlegt:

> Wo mir in der Arbeit Schwierigkeiten aufstossen, werden Sie derjenige seyn bey dem ich mich raths erhole, da ich mich als Ihren Schüler, und Sie als einen Mann betrachten darf[,] der sich meiner annimt.[11]

Schon wenige Tage später antwortet der vielbeschäftigte Professor aus Göttingen und versichert Zoëga seiner vollen Unterstützung. Er gibt ihm bibliographische Hinweise, animiert ihn, sich an einer numismatischen Preisaufgabe zu beteiligen, und unterstützt ihn bei seinem Vorhaben, auf einer Reise nach Wien, Italien und Frankreich seine numismatischen Fachkenntnisse zu vertiefen. Auch gibt er ihm genaue arbeitstechnische Instruktionen.[12]

Der wissenschaftliche Austausch zwischen beiden Gelehrten ist in dieser Zeit besonders eng und beschränkt sich keineswegs auf numismatische Fragen. Zoëga trägt seinem Göttinger Lehrer neuartige Hypothesen zur Deutung berühmter Antiken[13] und zu antiquarischen Fragen vor, die dieser teils aufgreift, teils kritisch kommentiert. Auch zu gemmenkundlichen Fragen gibt Heyne, der sich auf diesem Gebiet seit seiner Mitarbeit an Philipp Daniel Lipperts *Dactyliotheca Universalis* gut auskannte,[14] bereitwillig Auskunft.

Im Mai 1782 kann Zoëga endlich zu seiner auf zwei Jahre projektierten numismatischen Reise aufbrechen. Erstes wichtiges Ziel ist Göttingen, wo Heyne und Zoëga zusammen die Bestände des universitären Münzkabinetts ordnen wollen. Zwar hat Heyne dann wegen Arbeitsüberlastung dazu doch keine Zeit, aber Zoëga ist dennoch zufrieden: „man profitirt von dem Manne immer was".[15] Mit Briefen Heynes ausgestattet, besucht er das Gothaer Münzkabinett und reist dann weiter nach Wien, wo er unter Anleitung von

9 Vgl. Ibid., 242, Briefe n. 143.

10 C. Boehringer, „Heynes numismatische Forschungen und die Begründung der Münzsammlung", in *Das Studium des schönen Altertums*, 105–109.

11 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 243, Briefe n. 143.

12 Ibid., 256, Briefe n. 154.

13 Dazu unten Abschnitt 4.

14 D. Graepler, „Heynes Daktyliotheken", in *Das Studium des schönen Altertums*, 101–104.

15 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 281, Briefe n. 176.

Joseph Hilarius Eckhel, dem Begründer der modernen Numismatik, seine Ausbildung zum Münzexperten vervollkommnet.

Nachdem er sich 1784 endgültig in Rom niedergelassen hat, korrespondiert er nur noch gelegentlich mit Heyne. Erst nach dem Erscheinen seiner ersten großen wissenschaftlichen Publikation, des Katalogs der alexandrinischen Kaisermünzen aus der Sammlung Borgia, nimmt er im Oktober 1789 wieder Kontakt mit seinem Lehrer auf. Heyne antwortet in einem längeren Schreiben, in dem er Zoëgas Hinwendung zur ägyptischen Archäologie begrüßt und bibliographische Unterstützung anbietet.[16] In einem weiteren Brief einige Monate später äußert er sich hingegen deutlich kritischer: „In Ihren ägyptischen Forschungen und Erklärungen gehen Sie weiter als sich gehen läßt; Sie ziehen nicht immer die rechte Grenzlinie, wie ich in Ihrem Münzwerke sehe".[17] Heyne moniert, dass Zoëga sich auf Quellen der griechisch-römischen Zeit stütze, obwohl in dieser Zeit das Wissen um die genaue Bedeutung der altägyptischen Hieroglyphen bereits weitgehend verloren gewesen sei.

Heyne als Rezensent Zoëgas

Heyne hat die Publikationen seines Schülers eingehend in den *Göttingischen Gelehrten Anzeigen* (GGA) rezensiert, zuerst 1789 das Münzwerk,[18] dann 1802 das Buch über die Obelisken[19] und schließlich in einer ganzen Serie von Rezensionen 1808–1809 *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma*.[20] Der Ton ist durchweg sehr wohlwollend und anerkennend:

> Statt bloßer Hinstellung der Münzen, oder Häufung bekannter Compilationen, siehet Hr. Z. auf das Wesentliche, Wichtige und Nöthige, und führt den Leser oft auf Resultate, wodurch er die Münzkunde einen Schritt weiter bringt.[21]

16 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), 423, Briefe n. 445.

17 Ibid., 516, Briefe n. 488.

18 C.G. Heyne, *„Numi Aegyptii Imperatorii prostantes in Museo Borgiano Velitris"*, Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen 109 (1789), 969–976.

19 GGA 1802, 906–914.

20 GGA 1808, 286–288, 301–304, 310–312, 315–320, 345–352, 389–392, 429–432, 484–487, 879–880, 886–888, 911–912, 1633–1639, 1708–1711; GGA 1809, 1748–1754, 1809–1816, 1923–1928, 1965–1968.

21 GGA 1789, 970.

> Das Hauptstück von den Mumien lasen wir mit vielem Vergnügen und mit Belehrung; dieß wird forthin eine Hauptabhandlung über diesen Gegenstand seyn.[22]

Das Obeliskenbuch nennt Heyne ein Werk,

> welches einen größern Umfang von Gelehrsamkeit, Belesenheit und Alterthumskenntnissen enthält, als irgendein anderes in unsern Zeiten; worin sich eiserner Fleiß mancher Jahrzehende mit ruhigem Forschungsgeist und gesunder Beurtheilung, Griechische, Römische, Koptische Sprachkenntnisse mit grammatischer und critischer Genauigkeit, bey weitem nicht bloßer Sammlerfleiß, vereinigt findet; selten überläßt sich der Verf. Täuschungen der Phantasie und des Witzes, bleibt in den Grenzen der Mäßigung und Bescheidenheit, widerlegt ohne Beleidigung, und belehrt, ohne die vornehme Miene des Eigendünkels anzunehmen (er hat den Rec. selbst in einigen Meinungen mit guter Einsicht bestritten), und beschämt manchen Gelehrten, der kaum den hundertsten Theil dieser Kenntnisse mit betäubenden Geräusche vorbringt.[23]

Dass Heyne Zoëgas ägyptologische Forschungen so detailliert und so überaus positiv bespricht, ist umso bemerkenswerter, als er in seinen eigenen Schriften der ägyptischen Kultur sehr reserviert gegenüberstand. Zwar hatte er sich schon 1780–1781 in zwei Abhandlungen mit ägyptischen Mumien beschäftigt,[24] in seiner Archäologie-Vorlesung behandelte er Ägyptisches aber nur am Rande und mit deutlich negativem Unterton.

Wie zu erwarten, war Heyne höchst erfreut darüber, dass sich Zoëga am Ende seines Lebens wieder ganz der griechisch-römischen Antike zuwandte. *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma* begrüßte er als ein Werk,

> von dem wir uns, in Rücksicht auf des Verfassers critisch-gelehrte Behandlung, eine eigne Epoche des Kunststudiums versprechen: da es die Classe vom Ueberbliebenen der alten Kunstwerke begreifen soll, aus welcher man für das Al[t]erthum überhaupt und für die Kunstbehandlung am meisten lernen kann.[25]

22 GGA 1802, 910.

23 ebd. 913f.

24 Vgl. dazu Graepler, „Heynes Daktyliotheken“, 52–56.

25 GGA 1808, 286f.

Heyne widmete der faszikelweise erscheinenden Publikation nicht weniger als 17 Besprechungen in den GGA, in denen er jede neue Lieferung und jede einzelne Tafel eingehend kommentierte.[26]

> Was die Schrift vorzüglich lehrreich macht, sind die gründlichen antiquarischen, oft neuen, Anmerkungen, Berichtigungen, nähern Bestimmungen, welche nur die Frucht eines langen, auf bessere, nach Italien mitgebrachte, Grundsätze gebaueten, Studiums mitten unter den Kunstgegenständen selbst seyn konnten.[27]

Heynes Einfluss auf Zoëga

Trotz der engen Verbundenheit Zoëgas mit seinem Lehrer hat er diesen in seinen eigenen Werken fast nie zitiert. Lediglich Heynes Apollodor-Kommentar und seine Abhandlungen zu den Mumien werden von Zoëga gelegentlich erwähnt. Offenbar waren ihm in Rom andere Werke Heynes nicht erreichbar, darunter auch dessen wichtigste archäologische Publikation, die „Antiquarischen Aufsätze".[28] Selbst Heynes Rezensionen von Zoëgas Werken in den GGA hat dieser nie zu Gesicht bekommen.[29] Da er auch keine Mitschrift aus Heynes Archäologie-Vorlesung hinterlassen hat, besitzen wir keine direkten Quellen, die uns im Einzelnen belegen könnten, welche archäologischen Kenntnisse Zoëga bei seinem Göttinger Lehrer erworben hat. Welches die „besseren, nach Italien mitgebrachten Grundsätze" waren, die Zoëga seinem Studium bei Heyne verdankte, ist dennoch unschwer zu ermitteln, wenn man die Werke beider Gelehrter vergleicht.

Eine fundamentale Einsicht, die Heyne seinen Schülern zu vermitteln versuchte, war die, dass archäologische Zeugnisse weit mehr sein können als bloße Belege zur Illustration textgebundener Erkenntnisse, da sie sehr vieles überliefern, was durch Texte nicht bezeugt ist. Darum sei es so wichtig, schreibt Zoëga 1781 an den Vater, die archäologischen Primärquellen vor Ort zu erforschen,

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26 Vgl. o. Anm. 20.

27 GGA 1808, 301f.

28 Vgl. *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma incisi da Tommaso Piroli colle illustrazioni di Giorgio Zoega*, II, 148, Anm. 11.

29 Vgl. Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, III, 487, Briefe n. 645. F.G. Welcker berichtete ihm brieflich davon, vgl. Ibid., V, 375, Briefe n. 1258.

> in denjenigen Ländern wo die Geschichte der Menschen aufgedekt liegt, in den Ueberbleibseln ihrer Werke, wo wir wie aus Urkunden einen großen Theil desjenigen beurtheilen können, was wir sonst Schriftstellern, die voll Unrichtigkeiten u. Widersprüche sind, auf ihr Wort trauen mußten.[30]

Verschiedene Äußerungen Heynes deuten jedoch darauf hin, dass seine Skepsis gegenüber der Verknüpfbarkeit von schriftlicher und archäologischer Überlieferung noch größer war als diejenige Zoëgas, der stets bemüht war, beide Quellengattungen aufeinander zu beziehen und miteinander zu harmonisieren.

Grundlegend für Heynes Vorstellung von Wissenschaft war die Überzeugung, dass es zunächst auf eine vorurteilslose Sicherung des faktisch Gegebenen ankomme, aus dem erst in einem zweiten Schritt weiterführende Schlüsse gezogen werden dürften, und zwar nach streng nachvollziehbaren, rationalen Prinzipien. Alle nicht durch Argumente, sondern lediglich durch Vermutungen oder gar „Phantasien" gestützten Hypothesen lehnte er strikt ab. Genau hier setzte seine Kritik an Winckelmann an, dem er vorwarf, allzu oft in bloße „Schwärmerei" abzugleiten. Wie oben angedeutet, blieb sogar Zoëga von dem Vorwurf, sich in bloße Hypothesen zu versteigen, nicht immer verschont.[31] Doch bei weitem überwiegt Heynes Lob für die Gewissenhaftigkeit, mit der sein Schüler zu Werke ging.

Heynes manchmal schon an den Positivismus des 19. Jahrhunderts erinnernde Grundeinstellung kommt besonders programmatisch in einem Passus seiner Lobschrift auf Winckelmann zum Ausdruck:

> Ein Verzeichnis, ein Repertorium von allen Antiken, die man weiß, wäre also eines der ersten Werke, welches das Bedürfnis des Studiums des Alterthums erfordert. Dies Verzeichnis sey vorerst nur historisch und litterärisch; es enthalte die historischen Nachrichten desjenigen, was bereits von jedem Stücke berichtigt und was davon geurtheilet worden ist, wo man davon eine Nachricht und eine Zeichnung oder Kupfer finden kann. Dies Verzeichnis wird, wenn einmal eine Anlage gemacht ist, bald richtiger, kritischer und vollständiger können gemacht werden, und Supplemente liefert alsdenn von Zeit zu Zeit, wer da kann und will.[32]

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30 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 237f, Briefe n. 138.

31 Vgl. oben Anm. 17.

32 C.G. Heyne, *Lobschrift auf Winckelmann*, (Leipzig: Weygand, 1778), 32f.

Zoëga hat diesen Gedanken aufgegriffen[33] und daraus ein noch weit ehrgeizigeres Vorhaben entwickelt: die Veröffentlichung sämtlicher Antiken Roms in Wort und Bild, der sich dann entsprechende Publikationen von Funden anderer Orte anschließen sollten. Bekanntlich konnte Zoëga selbst den ersten Baustein, den Katalog der Reliefs, nur zu einem Bruchteil realisieren. Nach Welcker ist auf den 115 Tafeln der beiden publizierten Bände von *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma* „kaum der zwölfte Theil der für das Ganze bestimmten Basreliefs" erfasst.[34] Dennoch hat sich der von Heyne angedeutete und dann von Zoëga konkretisierte Gedanke als ungeheuer wirkungsvoll erwiesen, denn die Erstellung umfassender Material-Corpora wurde im 19. Jahrhunderts zu einem der Hauptziele der sich institutionalisierenden Archäologie. In Gestalt des *Corpus der antiken Sarkophagreliefs* entstand sogar ein direkt an Zoëga anknüpfendes Unternehmen, an dem noch heute, mehr als 200 Jahre nach seinem Tod, kontinuierlich gearbeitet wird.

Ein Punkt, auf den Heyne bei der Analyse antiker Kunstwerke besonderen Wert legte, war die klare Scheidung von Originalsubstanz und Ergänzungen, die aller Interpretation vorauszugehen hatte. In seiner Vorlesung spielte diese Frage eine ebenso große Rolle wie in seinen archäologischen Veröffentlichungen, unter denen der Aufsatz „Irrthümer in Erklärung alter Kunstwerke aus einer fehlerhaften Ergänzung" besondere Hervorhebung verdient.[35] Auch Zoëga hat diesem Aspekt stets besondere Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet.[36]

Welch großen Wert Zoëga auf die größtmögliche sachliche Genauigkeit und stilistische Treue der von ihm publizierten Abbildungen legte, ist häufig hervorgehoben worden. Wiederum darf man entscheidende Anregungen bei Heyne vermuten, denn die kritische Beurteilung von Abbildungen unter dem Aspekt ihrer dokumentarischen Zuverlässigkeit war ein Hauptthema von Heynes Archäologie-Vorlesung. So präsentierte er seinen Hörern stets mehrere Abbildungen des jeweils besprochenen Monuments, um aus der vergleichenden Betrachtung ein möglichst vollständiges Bild vom wirklichen Aussehen des Gegenstandes zu gewinnen und zur kritischen Bewertung der unterschied-

33 An F. Münter, 1.10.1791: „Med Tiden haaber jeg paa den Maade at formere en kritisk Fortegnelse over de samtlige Antiker i Rom, hvilken hidindtil ikke existerer og som maatte være meget interessant for alle Elskere af Alderdommen." (Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, III, 136f.).

34 F.G. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben. Sammlung seiner Briefe und Beurtheilung seiner Werke*, II, (Stuttgart – Tübingen: in der J.G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1819), 375.

35 C.G. Heyne, *Sammlung antiquarischer Aufsätze*, II, (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1779), 172–258.

36 Vgl. z.B. *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma incisi da Tommaso Piroli colle illustrazioni di Giorgio Zoega*, I, 208 (Kritik an Winckelmann wg. übersehener Ergänzungen).

lichen Abbildungsqualität und -treue anzuleiten. Zoëga hat diese Lektion strikt befolgt, indem er für seine eigenen Publikationen nur die zuverlässigsten Zeichner heranzog und deren Arbeit penibel kontrollierte. Ganz im Sinne Heynes ist seine Idee, in den Stichen des Reliefwerks die ergänzten Partien jeweils durch punktierte Linien abzugrenzen.

Wie objektnah Zoëga arbeitete, wird aus der Lektüre der Texte zu *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma* nicht unmittelbar evident, denn diese legen den Akzent meist ganz auf Deutungsfragen und entfernen sich in langen Exkursen oft weit vom konkreten Objekt. Wie jedoch Welcker in seinem Bericht über die unpublizierten Vorarbeiten zu dem Werk angibt, hat Zoëga zu jedem Relief eine so minutiöse und um Vollständigkeit bemühte Beschreibung angefertigt, dass „in gewisser Hinsicht der Kupferstich dadurch entbehrlich gemacht werden könnte".[37] „Die Bezeichnung ist gewöhnlich ganz allgemein gehalten, so daß gewöhnlich nicht einmal die Figuren von unzweifelhafter Benennung bey ihrem Namen genannt werden".[38] Soviel Streben nach Objektivität wäre dem pragmatischen Heyne vielleicht schon wieder zu weit gegangen, aber für die Entstehung einer professionellen archäologischen Methodik hat Zoëga damit zweifellos Grundlegendes geleistet.

Zoëga als Ideengeber Heynes

So klar die Impulse zu Tage liegen, die Zoëga von Heyne empfing, so darf doch nicht übersehen werden, dass jener keineswegs nur der Nehmende und dieser der Gebende war. Der wechselseitige Befruchtungsprozess zwischen beiden Gelehrten hätte allerdings noch sehr viel ergiebiger sein können, wenn die Zusammenarbeit auch nach Zoëgas Übersiedelung nach Rom so verlaufen wäre, wie Heyne sich dies ursprünglich vorgestellt hatte. Doch Zoëga schrieb nach 1782 kaum noch an seinen Lehrer.[39] Auch durch seine entschiedene Hinwendung zu ägyptologischen Themen entfernte er sich von Heynes Interessenkreis. Ein Beispiel soll zeigen, wie fruchtbar auch für den Göttinger Professor ein engerer und kontinuierlicherer Gedankenaustausch mit seinem Schüler hätte sein können.

37 ebd. 437.

38 ebd. 438.

39 Nur ein einziger Brief ist bezeugt, geschrieben 1789 (Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, II, 372–375, Briefe n. 424), während Zoëga von Heyne 1790 und 1802 insgesamt vier Briefe erhielt (Ibid., II, 422–424, Briefe n. 445; 515–519, Briefe n. 488; 526–527, Briefe n. 491 und IV, 521, Briefe n. 985).

Am 11.8.1781 schrieb Zoëga noch aus Kopenhagen an Heyne:

> Ein paar Ideen muß ich Ihnen noch vorlegen die mir in Rom eingefallen (…). Könnte der sogenante *Gladiator Ludovisi* nicht ein *Barbarus* seyn am Fusse irgend eines *Tropäums*? Wohl weiß ich daß man da gewöhnlicher gefesselte Gefangne hinstelte, als sterbende Feinde. Aber unschicklich finde ich doch dieses nicht, und hier war vielleicht eine besondre Veranlassung. Kopf und Strick und Schnurbart und die grössere Hälfte des unerklärlichen Instruments das unter ihm liegt, sind ohne Widerrede antik. Überwundne Barbaren volkommen auf dieselbe Art liegend auf ihren Schildern, nur nicht ganz nackt, und dem Anscheine nach nicht verwundet, finden wir z.B. auf Münzen Domitian's *Gesner t. 63*. (…) Man findet diese verwundete sterbende Figuren hin und wieder, insgemein unter Lebensgrösse, als vier in der *Farnesina*, drey auf der *Libreria di S Marco*. Die scheinen Gruppe gemacht zu haben (…).[40]

Heyne antwortete am 18.11.1781:

> Ihre Idee vom sterbenden Fechter fiel mir sehr auf. Daß er als Gruppe gedient hat, glaube ich auch. Aber die Wunde, wenn diese wirklich sich finde, wäre doch etwas Neues an einem solchen Gefangnen. Die Idee bleibt immer werth, öffentl. vorgetragen zu werden. Daß der Kopf des Fechters zuverlässig alt ist: hätte ich nicht geglaubt: der Spitzbart ist völlig aus *Michel Angelo* Zeit.[41]

Noch 1780 hatte Heyne in seiner Vorlesung die berühmte Statue als undeutbar bezeichnet:

> Das Stük wie es ist, läßt sich gar nicht erklären. Es ist wahrscheinlich, daß sowohl Kopf als rechter Arm neu ist. Kopf und Arm ist von Michel Angelo. Die Künstler seines Zeitalters sezten an alle Köpfe Schnurrbärte. (…) Auch der Strik um den Hals scheint eine Idee von Michel Angelo zu seyn, die er von den Etruscischen Sakrofagendekeln [sic!] entlehnt hat. (…) Ein Fechter ist es also nur durch die Ergänzung, und sonst nur eine

40 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 249, Briefe n. 148.

41 Ibid., 256, Briefe n. 154.

> liegende vielleicht sterbende Person wenn die Wunde ächt ist. Ein verwundeter Krieger muß eine oft ausgeführte Idee gewesen seyn.[42]

1785 hingegen gibt ein Hörer der Archäologie-Vorlesung Heynes Ausführungen so wieder:

> Mir deucht von dieser Statue gelte folgendes. Es seye ein Stük zu einer Trophee, es seye ein überwundener Barbar gewesen. Nun laßen sich alle Costume gedenken. Überdieß finden wir noch solche Tropheen, die Überwundene unten an dem Piedestal hatten. Überdem sind noch mehr solche einzelne Figuren gefunden worden. In der Farnesina stehen 4. u. in St. Marco 3. Zwey in Villa Albani, auch finden wir solche auf Münzen. Geßners Münz Samlung tab 63., alle unter menschl. Größe. (…) So daß es leicht ein überwund. sterbend. Barbar seyn kan, der wider zu einer Gruppe gehörte.[43]

Heyne übernahm Zoëgas Belege also bis in die Einzelheiten. Ob er die Idee wirklich als seine eigene deklarierte und Zoëgas Namen nicht nannte, ist unklar. In den erhaltenen Mitschriften wird dieser nicht erwähnt, allerdings heißt es in einer 1822, 10 Jahre nach Heynes Tod im Druck erschienenen Kompilation verschiedener Mitschriften der Vorlesung:

> *Zoëga* meint, diese Gestalt habe zu einem Siegesdenkmale gehört, und stelle einen Barbaren vor, wohin der Strick, das Haar und sein Knebelbart deute. *Zoëga* will noch vier Figuren dieser Art in der *Farnesiana*, in der *Bibliot. di S. Marco*, und zwei in der *Villa Albani* gefunden haben.[44]

Fest steht jedenfalls, dass Heyne durch Zoëga zu einer Deutung angeregt worden ist, die sich in den folgenden Jahrzehnten durchsetzen sollte[45] und die

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42 Vorlesungsmitschrift Niklaus Friedrich von Mülinen, Burgerbibliothek Bern, Mss. Mül. 507, 187.

43 Vorlesungsmitschrift Abraham Friedrich von Mutach, Burgerbibliothek Bern, Mss.h.h.XLV.86.1–3, 66.

44 C.G. Heyne, *Akademische Vorlesungen über die Archäologie der Kunst des Alterthums, insbesondere der Griechen und Römer*, (Braunschweig: bei Friedrich Vieweg, 1822), 168f.

45 Zur Deutungsgeschichte vgl. F. Haskell, N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, (London – New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 224–227; M. Luchterhandt *et al.* (hrsgg.), *abgekupfert. Roms Antiken in den Reproduktionsmedien der frühen Neuzeit*, (Petersberg: Imhof-Verlag, 2013), 305–307 (D. Graepler, F. Zabel).

bis heute Bestand hat: Aus dem „Gladiator Ludovisi“ wurde der „Sterbende Gallier“ (fig. 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1 *„Sterbender Gallier“, Gipsabguss, Universität Göttingen, Sammlung der Gipsabgüsse, Photo Stephan Eckardt.*

CHAPTER 5

Zoëga e la filologia

Alessandro Bausi

> But erudition becomes only a frivolous advantage, if, undirected by the torch of sound criticism, it does not attach itself to some one particular branch of history, or some separate and distinct portion of the immense edifice of human knowledge. This truth made a due impression on the mind of Zoega, and he fixed upon philology as a science not only grand and sublime in itself, but the basis of all human literature.

Questa caratterizzazione esclusivamente 'filologica' di Georg Zoëga si legge nel necrologio per la morte del grande studioso danese apparso nel 1812 per la penna di Arsenne Thiébaut de Berneaud.[1] L'erudito francese era collega dell'Accademia Italiana, di cui anche Zoëga era membro, e vi svolgeva la funzione di Segretario perpetuo della Classe di letteratura, storia e antiquaria. A quanto risulta dal carteggio edito,[2] negli anni tra il 1802 e il 1807 più volte Thiébaut si era rivolto con devozione e ammirazione al più anziano Zoëga, ormai celebrata e affermata autorità, pregandolo del suo aiuto e del suo parere in questioni accademiche.[3]

Ci si può naturalmente e ingenuamente chiedere se la 'filologia' attribuita da Thiébaut a Zoëga avesse anche per Zoëga lo stesso significato, in opposizione o in un rapporto di complementarietà con altro, ma non sembra possano esservi dubbi in proposito: 'filologia' indica anche per Zoëga un settore preciso di studi e anche un approccio, che possono o meno secondo il contesto essere usati in alternativa o in aggiunta all''antiquaria', in questo secondo caso indicando l'insieme dello studio dell'antichità. Lo dimostrano senza possibilità

1 A.T. de Berneaud, "Memoirs and remains of eminent persons", *The Monthly Magazine* 34.2 (1812), 129–132: 129; si tratta con tutta probabilità della trad. inglese del necrologio apparso in francese già nel 1809 e in italiano nel 1812, cfr. F.G. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben. Sammlung seiner Briefe und Beurtheilung seiner Werke*, Erster Theil, (Stuttgart – Tübingen: in der J.G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1819), xxii, ivi non segnalato.

2 L'epistolario di Zoëga, o a lui relativo, è citato in base a Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), cui si aggiunge il volume contenente il *Namensregister*.

3 Si vedano nel carteggio le lettere (tutte da Thiébaut a Zoëga, salvo la n. 996) nn. 932, 996, 1005, 1187, 1200, 1212.

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di fraintendimento, tra le altre, le preziose lettere scritte in forma di rapporto periodico sugli studi, gli scavi e le pubblicazioni, inviate secondo contratto al principe Frederik di Danimarca,[4] di cui do qui qualche esempio:

> Interessant für die Philologen ist die Schrift eines andern Exjesuiten de' Rossi, *Commentationes Laertianae*, wodurch nach dem Urtheil der Kenner sehr vieles zur Berichtigung des Textes vom Diogenes Laertius, welcher vol von Fehlern und Interpolationen ist, beygetragen werde.[5]
>
> Zu Rom sind verschiedne philologische und antiqvarische Schriften herausgekommen, unter welchen der dritte oder der Zeitfolge nach vierte Band des *Museo Pio-Clementino* vom Abt Visconti den ersten Plaz behauptet.[6]

E ancora:

> Von Visconti ist noch eine kleine Abhandlung über zwey Mosaike im Cabinet des Cav. Azara herausgekommen, zu Parma prächtig gedruckt, aber nicht für Geld zu bekommen. Andre antiqvarische oder philologische Werke, die in diesen lezten Jahren hier erschienen, sind mir nicht bekant, oder wollen mir wenigstens gegenwärtig nicht beyfallen. Ich schliesse hiebey dasjenige aus was Card. Borgia hat drucken lassen, und welches er Ihnen samtlich durch den Hrn. Baden übersenden wird.[7]

La percezione dei propri studi come innanzitutto 'filologici' è però di Zoëga stesso, come si legge per esempio in questa lettera a Friedrich Münter del 1798, in un periodo particolarmente difficile della sua esistenza:

> Tutta la mia incombenza quì per ora poteva essere d'assistere i miei patriotti, nè altra poteva essere la mira del ministro Bourke, quando egli con tanto zelo s'era impegnato acciocchè qui fosse una persona che agisse per la nostra nazione. lontano sempre dagli affari pubblici, sepolto nei miei studj filologici, nè conosciuto che da pochissime persone, avrei poca abilità per qualunque impiego di cui le funzioni non fossero semplicissime, nè avrei creduto di dovere accettare codesta agenzia, se non

4 Si veda K. Ascani, "Il carteggio di Georg Zoëga (1755–1809) mediatore fra Roma e la Danimarca", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 37 (2012), 151–157: 153–154.

5 Al "Kronprinz" Frederik del 26 settembre 1788, lettera n. 397.

6 Al "Kronprinz" Frederik del 23 aprile 1791, lettera n. 517.

7 A Joseph Eckhel del 22 febbraio 1791, lettera n. 506.

> nel presente momento la supponessi tale, benchè nel medesimo tempo lusingandomi di potere facilmente acquistare più cognizione degli affari nel caso che le relazioni commerciali tra la nostra patria e questa parte d'Italia aumentassero nel avvenire, come la felice mutazione di questo governo mi fa sperare.[8]

E uno Zoëga non meno straordinario 'filologo' che 'antiquario' disegna una lettera di Heinrich Kohlrausch a Herman Schubart successiva alla morte di Zoëga, avvenuta il 10 febbraio 1809:

> Wer die ganz einzige immense Mühseligkeit kennt, mit der neue antiquarische und philologische Kenntniße erworben werden können, kann auch einsehen, wie ihn der große Umfang derselben und die Fülle des Höchsten und Schönsten in Idee und Wirklichkeit was es in der Welt gab und was er kannte die so genannten genialischen eigentlich aber manirirten Urtheile—die mancher an ihn vermißte—auszusprechen hindern mußte, und die er dagegen durch umfaßende, richtige, belehrende ersetzte.[9]

Ma quale ruolo è oggi generalmente riconosciuto a Zoëga nella storia della filologia? Partendo da qualche opera datata, ma non ancora rimpiazzata, notiamo la rapida menzione di Zoëga, brillante allievo di Christian Gottlob Heyne, il grande maestro, fondatore della biblioteca universitaria di Göttingen, nel profilo di storia della filologia di Gino Funaioli,[10] probabilmente debitore, almeno in ultima analisi, alle aggiunte alla edizione postuma della *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft* di Friedrich August Wolf.[11] Per Rudolph Pfeiffer, Zoëga è

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8 A Friedrich Münter del 1 marzo 1798, lettera n. 740.

9 Heinrich Kohlrausch a Herman Schubart, 10 febbraio 1809, lettera n. 1265.

10 G. Funaioli, *Lineamenti d'una storia della filologia attraverso i secoli*, in *Studi di letteratura antica*, I, (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1946), 185–346; rist. da cui si cita, *Lineamenti di storia della filologia attraverso i secoli*, Introduzione di F. Giordano, (Bologna: Zanichelli, 2007), 146, "Sul terreno filologico gli effetti della palingenesi tedesca sono già notevoli in Cristiano G. Heyne (1729–1812), professore a Gottinga dal 1763, là suscitatore di ingegni, e maestro di Giorgio Zoega, il benemerito descrittore dei bassorilievi della collezione Albani—che ebbe un traduttore in F.G. Welcker—, archeologo, filologo, numismatico".

11 Come si evince dalla definizione di Zoëga come "benemerito descrittore dei bassorilievi della collezione Albani", cfr. F.A. Wolf, *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft nebst einer Auswahl seiner kleinen Schriften; und litterarischen Zugaben zu dessen Vorlesungen über die Altertumswissenschaft*, herausgegeben von S.F.W. Hoffmann, (Leipzig: bei August Lehnhold, 1833), 229; cfr. la trad. italiana della prima edizione del 1807 a cura di

il geniale archeologo danese incontrato a Roma da Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, l'amico di Thorvaldsen e l'autore dell'opera sui bassorilievi antichi[12] e degli scritti sulla religione greco-romana.[13] Un posto di assai maggior rilievo, e credo assai più appropriato, riceve Zoëga nella *Geschichte der Philologie* di Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, ove il grande filologo gli riconosce meriti di metodo assai maggiori di quanto sia immediatamente rilevabile da ciò che ha lasciato di scritti e pubblicazioni, e non ne dimentica, a differenza degli altri storici della filologia, il ruolo straordinario nella promozione della conoscenza del copto:

> Winckelmanns rechter, ergänzender Nachfolger war der Däne Georg Zoega, der seine Familie aus Italien ableitete und in Rom zum Romer ward. Unter Heyne gebildet hatte er in der Jugend auch die Überschwenglichkeit jener Jahre mitgemacht. In Rom, wo ihn das Leben zwang, auf vieles zu resignieren, ward er zu einem Muster von jener wahren Methode, die jede Aufgabe so behandelt, wie sie es verlangt, kurz oder breit, immer soviel als dazu gehört, nicht mehr aber auch nicht weniger, das volle Verständnis immer auf einen Punkt gerichtet. Bei Monumentalwerken ist die Feststellung des Tatsachlichen in der richtigen Beschreibung nicht nur die Grundlage, sondern ein gutes Teil der Erklärung. Darin ist er vorbildlich gewesen, und überhaupt haben seine Bassi rilievi für eine Reihe meist wenig bedeutender Werke einen Kommentar geliefert, wie ihn Schriftwerke noch nicht erhalten hatten. Es ist ein Jammer, daß er von dem, was er gerade auch an allgemeinen Anschauungen gewonnen hatte, gar wenig ausgesprochen hat. Doch mögen die Ägyptologen anders denken, denen er für das Koptische vielleicht noch mehr geliefert hat als Reiske den Arabisten. Mündlich wird er viel ausgesprochen haben. Kein Zweifel, daß Welcker, vielleicht selbst Wilheim von Humboldl bewußt oder unbewußt unter seinem Einfluß gestanden haben. Dasselbe wird für

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S. Cerasuolo, F.A. Wolf, *Esposizione della scienza dell'antichità secondo concetto, estensione, scopo e valore*, (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1999), con un pregevole saggio introduttivo su "Wolf teorico della filologia classica", 13–97.

12 *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma incisi da Tommaso Piroli colle illustrazioni di Giorgio Zoega pubblicati in Roma da Pietro Piranesi*, I–II, (Roma: presso Francesco Bourlié, 1808), la cui prima parte fu tradotta da F.G. Welcker come *Die antiken Basreliefe von Rom*, I: *Die Albanischen Basreliefe*, (Gießen: Müller, 1811); la biografia di Welcker di Zoëga è in effetti uno sviluppo della progettata prefazione alla traduzione tedesca di quest'opera, cfr. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben*, v.

13 R. Pfeiffer, *History of classical scholarship from 1300 to 1850*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 179.

> den Kreis hochgebildeter Männer und Frauen Kopenhagens gelten, der damals die aufstrebende deutsche Bewegung mitmachte. Thorwaldsen ist bei Zoega aus- und eingegangen.[14]

Poco oltre il Wilamowitz, il cui giudizio su Zoëga risentirà certamente dell'opinione del suo maestro Otto Jahn,[15] definisce Heyne "*praeceptor Germaniae*" per i suoi straordinari discepoli, tra cui accanto a Friedrich August Wolf, ai fratelli Alexander e Wilhelm von Humboldt, e Friedrich e Wilhelm Schlegel, Zoëga tiene il posto d'onore.[16]

Quando Wolf chiedeva l'8 aprile 1777 di essere immatricolato come "*studiosus philologiae*" a Göttingen, concludendovi gli studi con la sua edizione del *Simposio* di Platone nel 1782, Zoëga vi aveva già terminato l'anno prima il proprio soggiorno di studio, iniziato nel 1773, e aveva intrapreso il viaggio che lo avrebbe portato a recarsi a Roma nel 1783, e poi a stabilirvisi, e a dare una curvatura del tutto inconsueta alla sua carriera di studioso. Mentre il primato della filologia si afferma nella vita culturale tedesca, con l'assurgimento della disciplina a perno del sapere e della formazione delle élites, Zoëga, formatosi nelle università tedesche alla più avanzata riflessione intellettuale del tempo, si trasferisce nella Roma dell'ʻantiquaria' e delle accademie cardinalizie.[17] In Germania la filologia diverrà di lì a breve il fecondo terreno di scontro tra il nuovo orientamento comprensivo e di ispirazione romantica di Wolf, come

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14 U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1921; trad. ital. a cura di F. Codino, *Storia della filologia classica*, Torino: Einaudi, 1967), 45.

15 Cfr. "14. November. Oeffentliche Sitzung", in *Verhandlungen der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig*, Zweiter Band: *aus dem Jahre 1848*, (Leipzig: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1849), 209–226 (discorso tenuto da Otto Jahn, "Über das Wesen und die wichtigsten Aufgaben der archäeologischen Studien"): 217–218, 223; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, 67–68; A.A. Donohue, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3–4, 8–14.

16 von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, 46.

17 Per un panorama dell'ambiente romano del tempo e il ruolo di Zoëga, cfr. A. Hamilton, *The Copts and the West 1439–1822. The European Discovery of the Egyptian Church*, (Oxford: University Press, 2006), spec. 245–247, 268–270; P. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele III" di Napoli. Con un profilo scientifico di Stefano Borgia e Georg Zoega e una breve storia della formazione della collezione Borgiana*, Accademia dei Lincei Classe di scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche—Memorie, Serie IX, Volume XXV, Fascicolo 1, (Roma: Scienze e Lettere, 2009), 15–75, in particolare per il circolo di Stefano Borgia; F. Thomasson, *The Life of J.D. Åkerblad. Egyptian Decipherment and Orientalism in Revolutionary Times*, (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013), 306–360.

studio globale delle scienze dell'antichità, "ricostruzione, nella sua interezza, della vita antica, pensata come un'unità",[18] sanzionato nella elaborazione del suo continuatore August Böckh da una parte, e la filologia formale volta alla ermeneutica, alla metrica, alle questioni di lingua e stile, di impronta illuministica, di Gottfried Hermann, sostenitore di una filologia svincolata e indipendente dalla ricerca storica dall'altra.

Ben diversa la vita intellettuale italiana tra fine '700 e inizio '800, che non sarà inutile, come sempre, lumeggiare ricorrendo alla impareggiabile chiarezza sintetica di Sebastiano Timpanaro:

> Da allora [*scil*. da Pier Vettori, ultimo degli umanisti filologi] l'Italia aveva avuto, specialmente nel Settecento e nel primissimo Ottocento, archeologi, epigrafisti, numismatici di grande valore, appartenenti a quell'indirizzo di studi che si suol chiamare l'«Antiquaria», di cui non possiamo qui soffermarci a indicare i pregi e i limiti; ma la filologia, intesa come attività di restauro e di interpretazione dei testi, come studio storico del lessico e della sintassi, era—tranne isolate eccezioni—emigrata altrove: in Francia, e poi in Olanda e in Inghilterra, e poi in Germania; e lì si erano andate ponendo le basi anche per quel più ampio concetto di filologia (intravisto già dallo Scaligero, teorizzato dal Wolf e dal Böckh),[19] che veniva ad identificarsi con la ricostruzione storica della vita di un popolo in tutte le sue manifestazioni pratiche e culturali.[20]
>
> Certo è che, nel grande movimento intellettuale tedesco tra la fine del Settecento e i primi decenni dell'Ottocento, la filologia aveva avuto, come già nell'Umanesimo italiano del Quattrocento, una parte di primo piano, ed era stata sentita non come una disciplina speciale, ma come un elemento essenziale della nuova cultura. Ma da tutto questo fervore di idee l'Italia era rimasta esclusa. Qui duravano ancora, uniti spesso nelle medesime persone anche se con prevalenza dell'uno o dell'altro i due indirizzi

18 Prendo questa definizione calzante a Cerasuolo, "Wolf teorico della filologia classica", 36.

19 Sulla celebre polemica, cfr. Cerasuolo, "Wolf teorico della filologia classica", 36–37; anche G.M. Vian, *Bibliotheca divina. Filologia e storia dei testi cristiani*, (Roma: Carocci, 2001), 15–18.

20 S. Timpanaro, "Il primo cinquantennio della Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica", *Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica* 100 (1972), 387–441; rist. in *Sulla linguistica dell'Ottocento*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 259–314: 268; cfr. anche il fondamentale A. Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13.3–4 (1950), 285–315; per citare solo uno degli studi più recenti, P.N. Miller, F. Louis, *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800*, (Chicago: The University of Michigan Press, 2012).

> tradizionali degli studi classici: l'umanistico-gesuitico e l'antiquario. Il primo era il residuo del grande Umanesimo, svuotato di ogni sostanza innovatrice dalla Controriforma e ridotto a puro studio di imitazione formale dei classici (…) Ben altra serietà aveva ancora, almeno nei suoi maggiori rappresentanti, l'altra corrente, l'erudita-antiquaria, che aveva dominato nel Settecento. Spostando l'interesse dai testi letterari alle fonti monumentali—e quindi all'archeologia, all'epigrafia, alla numismatica—, l'antiquaria aveva rivelato nuovi aspetti della vita antica, mostrato che i testi letterari stessi non si possono intendere pienamente se non si ricostruisce, con l'aiuto di t u t t e le fonti a nostra disposizione, l'ambiente da cui essi nacquero (…) Tuttavia questa ricostruzione integrale della vita antica, a cui gli antiquari dicevano di mirare, era concepita ancora staticamente, come ricostruzione di un s i s t e m a unitario di istituzioni e di costumanze: mancava, o almeno rimaneva troppo subordinato all'esigenza sistematica, il concetto dello svolgimento storico (…) E intanto l'interesse predominante per i monumenti extra-letterari aveva portato a trascurare gravemente l'interpretazione degli autori con tutte le indagini di lingua, di stile, di metrica che ad essa si collegano. Specialmente il greco si andava sempre più disimparando e si riduceva a studio di pochi specialisti, come una lingua orientale: non a caso i pochi che sapevano il greco sapevano anche l'ebraico.[21]

Possiamo allora provare a ricomporre il mosaico, in cui pezzi combaceranno forse anche più semplicemente di quanto ci si aspetti. Zoëga condivide profondamente e sviluppa temi e metodi della cultura tedesca contemporanea che troveranno in Wolf la più avanzata ed esplicita teorizzazione, ma egli, dal canto suo, li mette soprattutto in pratica, senza approfondirne l'aspetto teorico: tra questi temi certamente hanno un posto rilevante la polemica con Winckelmann, esplicitata da Zoëga nella famosa lettera a Peter Frederik Suhm del 1791, ma ripresa anche nelle prime pagine dell'opera sui bassorilievi del 1808;[22] e, sempre nella stessa lettera, la chiarezza programmatica della necessità di costituire un *corpus* dei monumenti e di applicare regole trasparenti e rigorose di analisi e classificazione:

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21 S. Timpanaro, *La filologia di Giacomo Leopardi*, (Bari: Laterza, 1997), 3–5.

22 Cfr. *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma*, I, vii: "Troppo ancor l'immortale Winckelmann dando a luce la preziosa opera dei Monumenti Inediti s'è lasciato da negligenti disegnatori ingannare, e più volte ha profuso dell'erudizione su di oggetti che luogo non hanno, come già in varie occasioni rilevato ha Visconti, e come con rincrescimento ci caderà di passo in passo di rilevare".

> Les antiquarii (…) se sont contentés de discourir sur les monuments, chacun selon ses goûts et ses intentions, s'en servant plutôt pour faire montrer de leur génie et de leurs lecture que pour exposer nettement le monument même et son contenu individuel. Telle est la raison pour la quelle nous ignorons toujours quelles sont les oeuvres de l'antiquité qui nous sont restées et leur état. Nous n'en avons ni descriptions ni inventaires exacts, et les gravures sont, presque sans exception, incorrectes et infidèles. Il faut avoir comparé soi-même les dessins et les originaux pour se rendre compte qu'on a ajouté parfois, dans les ouvrages archéologiques les plus célèbres, par exemple chez Winckelmann, des figures entières, et même des figures principales, dont il n'y a plus la moindre trace dans le monument, tandis que d'autres, qui s'y voient encore, sont simplement omises. Je désire que ma patrie (…) approuve un projet tendant à introduire de la méthode et de la clarté dans un étude qui n'a connu jusqu'à présent ni règles ni netteté;[23]

polemica contro Winckelmann che è ben presente nella *Darstellung* del Wolf, che da parte sua prende ancora più decisa distanza dall'"antiquaria', esattamente come vi è presente, in un parallelismo con lo scritto di Zoëga che è impressionante, la pianificazione di una raccolta e di uno studio sistematico e analitico dei monumenti:

> Was aber die Aufzählung der erhaltenen Werke betrift, so wird jeder, übrigens weit entfernt so viel daraus zu erwarten, als uns die Fabricischen Bibliotheken in Ansehung der Schriften geben, wenigstens vorläufig ein Verzeichniß wünschen, das uns mit den in den Museen und Galerieen Europens aufgestellten, theils irgendwo abgebildeten, theils sonst berühmt gewordenen Stücken bekannt mache. Auf ein solches Repertorium würde dann bei den nähern Erläuterungen in den folgenden Disciplinen der Kunstlehre und der Kunstgeschichte Rücksicht zu nehmen seyn, und man würde durch den Ueberblick so vieler und mannichfaltiger Ueberreste auf eine anziehende Art zu dem ganzen Studium eingeladen werden. Daß durch dergleichen erste Bekanntachaften nichts weiter als allgemeine, noch nicht durch eigene Einsicht begründete, Kenntnisse entstehen müßten, möchte dem gehofften Nutzen wenig Eintrag thun: es ist derselbige Fall in der äußern Litteratur-Geschichte,

23 A P.F. Suhm del 29 ottobre 1791, lettera n. 534; la trad. francese è qui ripresa da Ascani, "Il carteggio di Georg Zoëga", 151; una trad. inglese della lettera è in Donohue, *Greek Sculpture*, 11.

> wo auch nur Aufzählung der Schriften nach Zeitaltern und Classen mit Anführung der besten fremden Urtheile und Kritiken über den Gehalt der Schriften erwartet wird. Bei der Erklärung dieser Einleitung verstände sich ohnedies, daß vieles entweder in Originalen oder in Abformungen und Kupferstichen den Augen des Lernenden darzustellen wäre, begleitet mit einzelnen Bemerkungen über Schönheit und Alter und die Stufen oder Gegentheile davon, wie sich eben die Gelegenheit fande. Für Berichtigung und Mittheilung genauerer Kenntnisse werden sodann die übrigen Disciplinen, jede nach ihrer Bestimmung, zu sorgen haben. Die nächste muß, wie es scheint, ein Analogon von demjenigen seyn, was für die schriftlichen Werke Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik leisteten. Nemlich auch die Werke der Kunst bedürfen zu ihrem Verständnifs und zur Bildung eines richtigen Urtheils darüber eine dreifache ähnliche Theorie, die wir Kunstlehre nennen können.[24]

Con qualche spunto per una nuova direzione di ricerca, che dovrà soprattutto indagare il ruolo che l'orientalistica ha avuto nella storia della filologia, chiudo la mia breve nota. Wolf si occupava di Omero e alla fine di testi classici; Zoëga, oltre ai bassorilievi, di monete[25] e di obelischi:[26] e di pergamene copte.[27] Della 'antiquaria', che come ha rilevato Timpanaro rappresentava allora, con tutti i limiti, il meglio dello studio dell'antichità a Roma e in Italia, Zoëga tenne in gran parte l'oggetto di studio, su cui applicò però, in singolare consentaneità, principi molto simili a quelli auspicati dal Wolf, ma elaborati per via indipendente e parallela. Lo studio del copto, e di quella particolarissima forma di documentazione rappresentata dai codici copti smembrati che costituivano gran parte del fondo già del Museo Borgiano, ora diviso tra la Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III di Napoli e la Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,[28] orientò in modo decisivo la ricerca di Zoëga: come rilevava Timpanaro, e il caso

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24 F.A. Wolf, *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft, nach Begriff, Umfang, Wert und Zweck*, Museum der Altertums-Wissenschaft 1, (Berlin: in der Realschulbuchhandlung, 1807), 69–73 (133–134 della trad. italiana).

25 *Numi Ægyptii imperatorii prostantes in Museo Borgiano Velitris adiectis praeterea quotquot reliqua hujus classis numismata ex variis museis atque libris colligere obtigit*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1787).

26 *De origine et usu obeliscorum ad Pium Sextum pontificem maximum*, (Romae: typis Lazzarinii Typographi Cameralis, 1797).

27 *Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur, Auctore Georgio Zoega Dano equite aurato ordinis Dannebrogici* (*Opus posthumum*) *cum 7 tabulis aeneis*, (Romae: typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1810).

28 Cfr. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani*, 77–101.

di Zoëga lo conferma, gli orientalisti erano di fatto i custodi della conoscenza del greco, e con esso di un patrimonio di conoscenze linguistiche e di metodo che si ascriveranno poi alla 'filologia formale' e a una linguistica non avulsa da preoccupazioni filologiche, anche quando la linguistica tenderà a distinguersi più nettamente dalla filologia;[29] la tipologia della documentazione copta, poi, dispersa e frammentaria, implicò da parte di Zoëga un attentissimo, e all'epoca assolutamente nuovo, lavoro di 'filologia materiale', e naturalmente di catalogazione in senso modernissimo, radicalmente diverso dalla pura indagine testuale formale;[30] un ulteriore elemento importante da considerare, infine, è che Zoëga non ebbe l'ansia di affrancamento dalla 'philologia sacra' di un Wolf,[31] anche qui per vari motivi comprensibili—la varietà degli oggetti di studio, la caratteristica di letteratura esclusivamente cristiana della letteratura copta, di cui anzi intravide la ricchezza e potenzialità anche come veicolo della letteratura apocrifa, e l'ambiente romano stesso, con la sua secolare presenza di molteplici comunità cristiane orientali.

29 Cfr. sopra, Timpanaro, *La filologia di Giacomo Leopardi*, 5; e anche "Il primo cinquantennio", 284, nota 41: "Diversa fu, e non soltanto in Italia, la situazione dell'orientalistica da un lato, della filologia romanza dall'altro. Qui glottologia e filologia, si può dire, nacquero insieme, e si trovarono fin dall'inizio felicemente unite negli stessi studiosi (…) lo studio del sanscrito fu generalmente associato a quello della linguistica indeuropea. Altrettanto avvenne per le lingue e le letterature semitiche": e potremmo certamente aggiungervi gli studi copti. Questa affermazione, in ogni caso, vale esclusivamente per il periodo prelachmanniano, dopo il quale, con rare eccezioni, mentre filologia classica e romanza seguono il loro corso, la filologia orientalistica resterà drammaticamente indietro; cfr. qualche cenno in A. Bausi, "Current Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Philology", in *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. Hamburg July 20–25, 2003*, edited by S. Uhlig *et al.*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 542–551: 543–544; con qualche dettaglio in più A. Bausi, "Philology as Textual Criticism: 'Normalization' of Ethiopian Studies", *Ethiopian Philology. Bulletin of Philological Society of Ethiopia* 1.1 (2008), 13–46: 22–24.

30 Cfr. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani*, 105–118.

31 Cfr. Cerasuolo, "Wolf teorico della filologia classica", 32, che indica in particolare nella filologia ebraica un interesse consapevolmente rimosso da Wolf, in linea con la distribuzione polare che vede invece gli orientalisti sull'altro versante della filologia formale.

CHAPTER 6

Georg Zoëga as Art Critic

Jesper Svenningsen

Among Georg Zoëga's countless activities, his role as art critic is undoubtedly among the least well-known, especially to a non-Danish audience. Yet for many years, Zoëga sent regular reports on the Roman art scene to The Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. Forty-five such reports are preserved.[1] Though Zoëga was (strictly speaking) an amateur in matters of contemporary art, his particular brand of art criticism is not at all uninteresting. This chapter presents a few remarks on the language and terminology used by Zoëga in his writings on contemporary art as well as (and more importantly) his thoughts on the imitation of classical art.

The Background and the Predecessor

By 1790, Georg Zoëga had for some years sent regular reports on archaeological excavations and scholarly research back to Denmark. He had been given the commission to do so in May 1788, and these reports (written in German) were circulated among all interested scholars and clergymen in Copenhagen.[2] Yet Zoëga would surely never have dreamt of offering his services in matters of art criticism. Soon, however, a now completely forgotten series of letters had also begun to circulate at the Danish court. The author of these letters was Johan Conrad Spengler (1767–1839), who in many ways should be considered Zoëga's immediate predecessor as travelling art critic.

1 The forty-five preserved reports have been published in Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), letters nn. 449, 458, 463, 469, 475, 480, 484, 493, 499, 501, 505, 512, 520, 521, 525, 529, 532, 535, 539, 545, 549, 556, 561, 569, 581, 583, 587, 592, 595, 600, 605, 612, 622, 635, 637, 638, 639, 654, 715, 719, 724, 727, 728, 762 and 900. Zoëga's correspondence is cited after these volumes. During the years 1790 to 1802 the Academy minutes mention the reception of thirty-seven of these reports plus a number of letters, not otherwise known. Zoëga's letters to Münter also mention a number of lost letters, bringing the total up to at least sixty-four reports (see Appendix).

2 See for instance the reference to such reports in the letter from Friedrich Münter to Johan Bülow, letter n. 428 (10 November 1789).

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Spengler was the youngest son of Lorenz Spengler, then steward of the royal collections in Copenhagen. In the years 1787 to 1790 the young Spengler went on his Grand Tour. Initially he was supposed to learn trade and business. However, while he was abroad it became increasingly clear that his older brother was unfit to take on the office of their father. Johan Conrad now had to prepare for a change of career and to prove himself worthy to one day take over his father's post. The course of action was probably suggested to him by his father, as Spengler began to send home lengthy descriptions of the art works that he encountered. Within the next three years he reported on every accessible art collection, every notable church and palace on his way. The letters were circulated at court and presumably also at the Academy of Fine Arts. As a consequence the Spengler letters ended up in different hands. Notably, some ended up in the ownership of Court Marshal Johan von Bülow, who also kept most of Zoëga's archaeological reports. Today the Spengler letters are preserved in a number of different Danish libraries and archives, which also explains their present obscurity. But the Spengler letters surely deserve to be published, not least as they must have helped create an appetite for news on the fine art in Copenhagen. In fact, the Spengler letters may well have contributed to pave the way for the commission given to Zoëga.

Zoëga, the Art Correspondent

On 19 December 1789 the painter Nicolai Abildgaard wrote Zoëga, telling him of his nomination as artistic correspondent to the king's cousin, the Hereditary Prince Frederik (1753–1805). The latter served as president of The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Zoëga agreed to take on the commission and in reality, it was left entirely to him to define the task. When writing Friedrich Münter in January, Zoëga was not in the least bit of doubt as he proclaimed his intentions to focus his attention on all notable contemporary art works produced or exhibited in Rome. Yet Zoëga's ambitions were actually quite high. He even planned a letter concerned with such general questions as "the fate of art at different times and the reasons which produces same fate".[3]

Zoëga's first letter to the Academy of Art is dated 10 February 1790. The report was well received in Copenhagen and Zoëga was immediately elected

3 Letter n. 449 (10 February 1790).

an absentee member of the Academy.[4] Zoëga kept writing such reports for the next eleven years, though the rate slowed down a great deal after 1793 (see Appendix). During this period he made regular visits to the artists' studios and kept a close eye on every public art exhibition in Rome. From the Academy minutes we learn that his reports would occasionally be read aloud at meetings and would otherwise circulate among its members.[5]

Problems of Language and Terminology

Turning now to the style of Zoëga's criticism, we often find him struggling to find a suitable terminology. His anxiety was actually justifiable since at the time no established tradition of art criticism existed in the Danish language. In March 1790, four weeks after sending his first report, Zoëga writes Friedrich Münter complaining:

> If only I was allowed to write these reports in German too, which would be much less difficult to me since this subject in particular requires a terminology that I do not find in the Danish language. I take advice from (*scil*. the painter Johan Herman) Cabott but find that he suffers equal embarrassments.[6]

When writing Abildgaard in April, Zoëga is still not very convinced of his own competence on the subject of art. He writes apologetically:

> You hereby receive my third report for His Royal Highness, which I hope will be accepted with all the tolerance needed by these first attempts on matters that I am not used to write on and in a language in which I have lost all routine.[7]

Clearly Zoëga found himself lacking a suitable terminology. As a consequence, he occasionally had to invent new terms or find creative uses for Danish words.

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4 The reception of Zoëga's reports has recently been treated by E. Salling, "Relations between the Danish Academy of Fine Arts and the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 37 (2012), 168.

5 Salling, "Relations between the Danish Academy", 168.

6 Letter n. 454 (10 March 1790). Unless otherwise noted all translations are my own.

7 Letter n. 462 (28 April 1790).

One instance is the Danish noun 'Holdning' (literally meaning 'attitude' both in terms of physical posture and viewpoint). In Zoëga's writings, though, the exact meaning of the term is often unclear. Apparently the term came to mean something like 'firmness', 'resoluteness' and 'determination' and Zoëga would use the word to characterise either the composition or the expression of an art work as well as its moral content.

The Zoëga Brand of Art Criticism

Otherwise, Zoëga rested heavily on the critical vocabulary of Winckelmann and Mengs. He would judge an art work in terms of such basic neo-classical qualities as outline, expression, invention, simplicity and truth. As such, Zoëga's reports often seem like textbook examples of neo-classical art criticism. One need not to dwell too long on his use of these terms and a few characteristic examples will suffice—most of them in the negative.

The neoclassical love for clearness of outline and purity of colours is, for instance, clearly felt in Zoëga's description of the English painter Hugh Robinson, whom Zoëga criticises for his "(…) contours and tones in the melting manner of the Venetian school (…)".[8] In general, Zoëga was disgusted by any late-baroque painterly style and he complains that most contemporary Roman painters seemed like followers of Andrea Sacchi rather than of Raphael.[9] In fact, there were only a few Italian artists whom Zoëga could admire: "Among the Italians, Canova is the only one, in whose work we find the study of nature and of the antiquities combined with tasteful invention and expressive attitudes".[10] Otherwise, Zoëga would usually condemn contemporary Italian art and architecture as decayed and degenerate.[11] The French too had some serious shortcoming, and Zoëga would often speak of the theatricality of French taste, which tended towards the affected and overly elegant. In one instance he would complain that, "The draughtsmanship is often incorrect, the heads lack the nobility required for Greek heroes, and the composition and expression is in a French theatre taste".[12] Zoëga's demands on an art work are summed up in his treatment of Angelica Kaufmann:

8 Letter n. 520 (7 May 1791).
9 Letter n. 449 (10 February 1790).
10 Letter n. 475 (3 July 1790).
11 Letter n. 449 (10 February 1790).
12 Letter n. 463 (28 April 1790).

> Her draughtsmanship is neither correct nor characteristic; the colouring has a kind of pleasantness but lacks truth. (. . .) The draperies are mannered and do not correspond to the shape or movements of the limbs. Nor should one expect to find any attitude in her work, as the colours are too brilliant for the eye to find rest.[13]

To this standard neo-classical vocabulary of art critical terms, however, Zoëga added his own personal touch. When looking at contemporary paintings and sculptures, Zoëga always required (but often found missing) a certain sense of historical logics and decorum. This is the point in which Zoëga reveals himself as a scholar rather than an artist. Occasionally he would use his dry wit to poke fun at the lack of historical logic in an artwork. A characteristic example is his view on a well-known kind of neoclassical monument, the wall pyramid. Zoëga says:

> To place a coffin outside a pyramid is a very common idea that can be found on many graves in Roman churches, even though the thing in itself is as unnatural as representing a bedchamber with the bed placed outside the door.[14]

When such logics were found missing, Zoëga would often blame the lack of classical knowledge on part of the artists. For instance, when speaking of a painting by the German painter Johann Heinrich Schmidt (1757–1821), Zoëga says:

> the composition lacks the spirit of antiquity, as is usually the case when our artists choose Greek myths. Instead of reading beforehand the works of a poet who has treated the same subject and thus place oneself in the habits and mindset of the time (. . .) they look up an entry in some mythological encyclopaedia and begin composing from these strange, only half matured ideas.[15]

13 Letter n. 458 (27 March 1790).

14 Letter n. 480 (11 August 1790).

15 Letter n. 520 (7 May 1791).

On Imitation of Classical Art

Here we close in on the point in which Zoëga shows himself as something of a pioneer and as the owner of some surprising insights. On the one hand, classical style was easy enough to appreciate and the study of Greek and Roman art was certainly desirable. There is no question about that in Zoëga's writings. On the other hand, Zoëga could observe how classical subject matter was often misunderstood and how the detailed facts of classical life were usually misrepresented in art. As a consequence he arrived at the conviction that classical mythology and history was perhaps not the most suitable subject to the modern artist.

This problem is at the heart of Zoëga's 30th report to the Academy of Arts, dated 17 April 1793. This is a key text in his writing on art, since it is the only letter in which he delves into broader questions of art theory. Zoëga here elaborates on his earlier observation that contemporary artists and viewers were essential strangers to the ancient world:

> It appears to me that the imitation of Greek art is nowadays being recommended in a much too general and vague way. This is done without studying what the Greeks have created under varying circumstances; for what reason they treated things in their peculiar manner; the relationship between our conditions and theirs; and whether our way of thinking and representing things can and should be reconciled with their way.[16]

This realisation (or perhaps this uneasiness) moves Zoëga to put forth a highly unorthodox suggestion: perhaps, he says, the contemporary way of thinking is in fact closer to the medieval mindset. Perhaps then, medieval subject matter may indeed be preferable to ancient subjects, which are (like the ancient world in general) foreign to modern man. This ties in with a comment he had given in one of his earlier letters:

> Everywhere our artists have no notion of the gods and heroes of the Ancients. In a way, it is impossible that they should have, and it is almost to be wished that they would not choose such subjects. (…) In some ways, the medieval era could be for us, what the mythical era was to the Greeks, since there is still so much of the medieval way of thinking left in ours and it is therefore much easier to imagine those times. And the

16 Letter n. 600 (17 April 1793).

> artists of each country would then find interesting subjects in the history of their own nation.[17]

Here Zoëga makes a significant departure from the Winckelmann school of thinking. In his book *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* from 1755 Winckelmann had famously said: "Der einzige Weg für uns, groß, ja, wenn es möglich ist, unnachahmlich zu werden, ist die Nachahmung der Alten".[18] Now, a couple generations later, Zoëga took a quite different stance on the matter of imitation:

> It is undeniable that we have profited much from the Ancients, that the figures in our art have become more beautiful, simpler and nobler by studying the antique models. Yet I believe that through unguided and unreasoned imitation of these models we may lose more than we gain. I further believe that it would be more useful to set certain limits to the imitation than continuously to encourage the imitation of antiquities.[19]

These remarks are if not outright revolutionary then at least surprising to those who consider Zoëga as no more than the product of neo-classicism. Unlike the followers of Winckelmann, Zoëga was obviously ready to accept a separation of form from content. In terms of form, Zoëga shared the neo-classical aesthetics, yet in terms of content he found little artistic relevance in the classical world. Add to this his apparent idea of history as mental progression, which inevitably left the ancient world beyond the horizon of modern man (scholars like Zoëga excluded of course). This all amounts to his suggestion that artists start looking in new places for profound subject matter and to his apparent embrace of romanticist views on the medieval period. Such views had occasionally been expressed in art since at least the 1770s, but had not yet found a theoretical and critical voice. So in a way, the writings of Zoëga appeared at just the right time—but in the wrong language.

17 Letter n. 469 (2 June 1790).

18 J.-J. Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*, (Dresden – Leipzig: Im Verlag der Waltherischen Handlung, 1755), 4–5.

19 Letter n. 600 (17 April 1793).

The Reception of the Reports

Back in Denmark, Zoëga's reports appear to have met with great interest. Initially the academy had "underlined the importance of being kept up to date on the news of Rome from a sensible, scholarly man".[20] The general interest in Zoëga's reports is attested by the number of transcriptions made. One series of transcriptions was for instance owned by Johan von Bülow, while another series was carried out by Johan Conrad Spengler and is now found among his papers in the Statens Museum for Kunst.[21]

By the late 1790s, however, a vicious rumour reached Zoëga, that Abildgaard no longer bothered to show the Roman reports to the academy members.[22] As written communication commenced after the wartime interruption of 1798–1799, Zoëga once again stepped up the frequency of his reports. Though he managed to write eleven such reports between October 1799 and November 1800, this last series of letters met with limited interest and only a single report is preserved today.[23] This sudden indifference is paradoxical compared to the initial interest from the Academy and the fact that 44 of Zoëga's earlier reports had even been recently published in the Danish periodical *Minerva*. Today, this publication is in fact our main source for Zoëga's letters on art, as the originals have in many cases been lost.[24]

In historical hindsight, it is nevertheless a shame that Zoëga was not allowed to write his reports in German. Had his thoughts on art been published in a different language, perhaps his ideas on imitation and on the search for profound subject matter would have had a chance to resonate outside Denmark. Even today the fact that Zoëga's 30th art report in particular—the one concerned with art theory—has not been translated into other languages, keep him from being recognised as a notable art theorist of the late eighteenth century.

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20 Letter from the joint academy to the Hereditary Prince Frederik in the Danish National Archives, Archive of The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Letter book, 16 March 1790, n. 11, see also Salling, "Relations between the Danish Academy", 168.

21 Statens Museum for Kunst, archive of the Royal Collection of Paintings, *Varia*. This group includes transcripts of the following letters: Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, nn. 480, 493, 501, 505, 512, 520, 521, 525, 529, 532, 535, 605 and 612.

22 Letter n. 812 (15 March 1800).

23 The number of reports is given in letter n. 849 (21 November 1800). See also K.F. Johansen, "Georg Zoëga og Rom", in *Rom og Danmark gennem Tiderne*, redigeret af L. Bobé, I, (København: Levin & Munksgaard, 1935), 240–241.

24 According to the research by Emma Salling the letters were still present in the Academy archives in the 1811, see Salling, "Relations between the Danish Academy", 168.

Appendix

List of Zoëga's Art Reports

Note: Approximate dates are given in square brackets, while the source of any reference to lost reports are given in round brackets.

Date	Ascani 2013	Academy minutes	Published in *Minerva*	Main contents
10 Feb. 1790	449	29 Mar. 1790	Apr. 1798, 317–323	Miscellaneous
27 Mar. 1790	458	–	Apr. 1798, 323–328	Miscellaneous
28 Apr. 1790	463	31 May 1790	Apr. 1798, 328–334	Miscellaneous
2 June 1790	469	–	Apr. 1798, 335–339	Encaustic painting
3 July 1790	475	30 Aug. 1790	July 1798, 48–54	Canova
11 Aug. 1790	480	27 Sep. 1790	July 1798, 54–60	Trippel
11 Sep. 1790	484	22 Oct. 1790	July 1798, 60–64	Exhibition at the French Academy
27 Oct. 1790	493	6 Dec. 1790	July 1798, 66–72	Gauffier and Sablet
11 Dec. 1790	499	7 Feb. 1791	July 1798, 72–76	Schmidt
29 Dec. 1790	501	–	July 1798, 76–80	Excavations
29 Jan. 1791	505	28 Feb. 1791	Aug. 1798, 129–133	Pichler and Gagneraux
26 Mar. 1791	512	30 May 1791	Aug. 1798, 133–139	Fabre, Sable and Saint Ours
7 May 1791	520	27 June 1791	Aug. 1798, 139–150	Gauffier and Schmid
22 June 1791	521	1 Aug. 1791	Aug. 1798, 150–157	Durno and Angelini
6 July 1791	525	29 Aug. 1791	Aug. 1798, 157–161	Trippel and Peter
31 Aug. 1791	529	31 Oct. 1791	Aug. 1798, 162–165	Exhibition at the French Academy
30 Sep. 1791	532	28 Nov. 1791	Sept. 1798, 257–261	Garnier and Girodet
31 Oct. 1791	535	5 Dec. 1791	Sept. 1798, 261–265	Le Tierce
3 Dec. 1791	539	30 Jan. 1792	Sept. 1798, 265–270	Berger and Sablet
7 Jan. 1792	545	27 Feb. 1792	Nov. 1798, 121–124	Cavallucci
18 Feb. 1792	549	13 Apr. 1792	Nov. 1798, 125–130	Labruzzi, Gauffier and excavations
18 Apr. 1792	556	29 May 1792	Nov. 1798, 130–137	Canova
5 May 1792	561	2 July 1792	Nov. 1798, 137–144	Excavations
27 June 1792	569	6 Aug. 1792	Nov. 1798, 144–148	Obelisks
27 Aug. 1792	581	–	Nov. 1798, 148–157	Lanzi and art history
29 Aug. 1792	583	–	Nov. 1798, 157–161	Lanzi and art history
3 Oct. 1792	587	3 Dec. 1792	Dec. 1798, 319–326	Exhibition at the French Academy
26 Dec. 1792	592	24 Feb. 1793	Dec. 1798, 326–330	Trippel and Gauffier
9 Feb. 1793	595	25 Mar. 1793	Febr. 1799, 209–215	Excavations and Denis
17 Apr. 1793	600	27 May 1793	Mar. 1799, 257–267	Art theory
28 June 1793	605	7 Oct. 1793	Mar. 1799, 267–274	Canova and excavations

TABLE (*cont.*)

Date	Ascani 2013	Academy minutes	Published in *Minerva*	Main contents
5 Oct. 1793	612	25 Nov. 1793	Mar. 1799, 274–278	Trippel and Canova
12 Feb. 1794	622	28 Apr. 1794	Mar. 1799, 278–82	Flaxman, Kauffman and Rehberg
26 June 1794	635	4 Aug. 1794	Mar. 1799, 283–287	Excavations
9 July 1794	637	29 Sep. 1794	Mar. 1799, 287–290	Excavations
31 Aug. 1794	638	27 Oct. 1794	Apr. 1799, 1–8	Excavations
10 Sep. 1794	639	1 Dec. 1794	Apr. 1799, 8–13	Excavations
11 Feb. 1795	654	1 Apr. 1795	Apr. 1799, 13–21	Excavations
May 1795	(666)	–	–	?
Aug. 1795	(666, 673)	28 Sep. 1795	–	Excavations
Mar. 1796	–	2 May 1796	–	?
Oct. 1796	–	2 Jan. 1797	–	?
[Dec. 1796/ Jan. 1797]	(706)	–	–	Villa Borghese
24 June 1797	715	–	May 1799, 139–144	Excavations
8 Sep. 1797	719	–	May 1799, 145–150	Cardelli
18 Nov. 1797	724	29 Jan. 1798	May 1799, 150–155	Excavations
13 Dec. 1797	727	–	May 1799, 155–169	Excavations
30 Dec. 1797	728	26 Feb. 1798	June 1799, 269–283	Excavations
7 July 1798	762	27 Aug. 1798	June 1799, 283–288	Carstens
24 Oct. 1799	(782, 787, 791, 812)	–	–	Wartime destructions
1 Nov. 1799	(791, 812)	–	–	?
7 Nov. 1799	(791, 812)	–	–	?
[late 1799?]	(812)	24 Mar. 1800	–	?
[early 1800]	(812)	24 Mar. 1800	–	?
[spring 1800?]	(849)	–	–	?
[spring 1800?]	(849)	–	–	?
[spring 1800]	(822)	7 July 1800	–	?
[May 1800]	(828)	7 July 1800	–	?
31 July 1800	(840, 849)		–	?
15 Sept. 1800	(849)		–	?
Apr. 1801	–	5 Apr. 1802	–	?
30 May 1801	–	21 July 1801	–	?
22 Aug. 1801	900	7 Dec. 1801	–	Thorvaldsen, Benvenuti and Camuccini
[Nov. 1801?]	(917)		–	?

CHAPTER 7

An Antiquarian Depicted. The Visual Reception of Georg Zoëga

Anne Haslund Hansen

The paradox of being forgotten is that one must first be remembered. What is not in some way or another remembered will not be forgotten. In this chapter, I will discuss the visual reception of Zoëga.[1] The portrait as a genre is documentation and remembrance, but also interpretation. Although we may have a tendency to focus on those images that come closest to an actual representation of a self-fashioning Zoëga, the posthumous portrait is equally important—if indeed we are concerned with precisely how Zoëga has been remembered. Together these images draw a meandering line of the shifting perceptions of Georg Zoëga, spanning almost a century and a half.

In an article from 1904 about portraits of Zoëga, the Danish man of letters Frederik R. Friis suggested that renderings of Zoëga had perhaps once been more numerous.[2] To Friis, Zoëga's high scholarly standing and his many artist acquaintances stood in strange contrast to the very few known portraits of him. This presumption perhaps owes more to what characterized the culture of late eighteenth-century Rome, than to anything biographical. At least it speaks against what Øjvind Andreasen has remarked about Zoëga, namely that he disliked being portrayed.[3] Friis's remark is interesting however as it suggests a visual absence—that something about the person Zoëga is missing or wanting.

The artistic portrayals of Zoëga discussed here fall into three groups: contemporary portraits, posthumous renderings and finally portraits later identified as depictions of Zoëga.[4] This paper owes part of its inspiration to Janet Browne's study on depictions of Charles Darwin, where she discusses the role

1 Victoria Gordon Friis, ARCA, kindly revised and improved the English draft.

2 F.R. Friis, *Kulturhistoriske Studier*, I, (Kjøbenhavn: G.E.C. Gads Universitetsboghandel, 1904), 1–2 ("Portræter af Georg Zoega og nogle Breve fra ham og til ham").

3 Stated in museum register regarding inv. n. A 7455. Museum of National History, Frederiksberg Castle. I am indebted to Søren Mentz.

4 For images not discussed here see: *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, XVI, (København: Gyldendal, 1984), 162.

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of images in the construction of an individual's "scientific reputation" and in the "making of renown".[5]

Contemporary Portraits

The earliest known depiction of Zoëga—at the age of about 30—is a painting in profile by the Danish artist Johan Herman Cabott (1754–1814).[6] In a letter from 1786, Zoëga mentions sitting for Cabott, and he remarks that the artist was a gifted portrait painter.[7] Despite the fact that this portrait is perhaps the most true-to-life painting of Zoëga, it has never been widely known or reproduced.[8]

The painting is one of 22 portraits of members of the *Accademia Volsca*, a learned society founded by Cardinal Borgia in 1765, modelled on the *Accademia Etrusca* in Cortona.[9] Several Danes were counted among its members. The portraits originally formed part of the library of Cardinal Borgia and are now the property of Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli in Rome.[10]

The *Accademia Volsca* paintings are all designed in a similar fashion. The sitter is shown with only the head and shoulders visible. The shape of the paintings is that of a medallion. This type of collective portraiture draws on formats and traditions already established in antiquity. As a genre, such series of portraits (mostly of illustrious men) touch on two important elements in connection with remembrance: namely selection and connectedness. The emphasis of the portrait is not its subject alone but also on the subject's inclusion in a particular commemorative context, in this case Zoëga in the role as a Borgia *protégée*.

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5 J. Browne, "Looking at Darwin. Portraits and the Making of an Icon", *Isis* 100.3 (2009), 542 and 570.

6 A. Germano, M. Nocca (a cura di), *La Collezione Borgia. Curiosità e tesori da ogni parte del mondo*, (Napoli: Electa, 2001), 282–283; K. Ascani, "Kardinalens kuriositeter", *Sfinx* 24 (2001), 166–171, n. 4. I thank Karen Ascani for these references.

7 Dated 3.11.1786. Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), 131, n. 313. The painting is dated 1787 and the letter also indicates that Zoëga had not yet seen the finished result.

8 The portrait adorns the recently published volumes of Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*.

9 M. Stuiber, *Zwischen Rom und dem Erdkreis. Die gelehrte Korrespondenz des Kardinals Stefano Borgia (1731–1804)*, Colloquia Augustana 31, (Berlin: Akademie, 2012), 121 and 333–338.

10 Inv. n. PF 365.

The contribution by Friis from 1904 focuses on the portraits of Zoëga made by Bertel Thorvaldsen.[11] The role of Zoëga as a mentor for Thorvaldsen is well known. Their friendship resulted in four drawings from the hand of Thorvaldsen, depicting Zoëga at the age of about fifty. These are all held in the Thorvaldsens Museum: inv. n. C79v, Zoëga with Wilhelm von Humboldt (date: 1804–1805);[12] inv. n. C66r, two sketches, profile view and caricature with horns (date: 1805); inv. n. C761r, profile view in medallion (date: 1809); inv. n. C762, profile view (date: 1811–1813).[13]

Thorvaldsen's images of Zoëga were copied and used continuously. In particular the profile view in medallion from 1809 came to be more or less synonymous with Zoëga depicted. It formed the basis for the portrait in Visconti's *Ritratto di Giorgio Zoega Danese* (n.d.), Welcker's *Zoega's Leben* (1819) and others. It is a depiction which stays true to Zoëga's person. However, it is also idealizing and evasive in nature. This is to some extend characteristic for all the contemporary portraits of Zoëga.

Posthumous Portraits

The volumes *Serie di vite e ritratti de famosi personaggi degli ultimi tempi*, 1815–1818, were intended as an educational journey through famous people of the world. A little more than three hundred individuals are mentioned, each with a portrait and a brief biography.[14] The engraving of Zoëga is by the artist Sergent-Marceau (1751–1847) and shows him seated at a desk, studying some coins with a magnifying glass. This work is an iconic representation, rather than an actual portrait, drawing on conventional perceptions of the antiquarian figure, such as the rendering in Louis Jobert's *La Science des Medailles* from 1739.

Originating from works like Vasari's *Le Vite* from the mid-sixteenth century, such books of "famosi" represent a codification of certain biographies. The

11 The contribution by Friis was based on A. Michaelis, "Thorvaldsen und Zoega", *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 38 [=N.F. 14] (1903), 193–196.

12 For an interpretation of the motif see F. Thomasson, *The Life of J.D. Åkerblad. Egyptian Decipherment and Orientalism in Revolutionary Times*, (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013), 313, fig. 52.

13 The drawings can be accessed at THMA, http://www.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en/collections.

14 For Zoëga, see volume 2 (Milano: presso Batelli e Fanfani, 1818), unpaginated. Zoëga's entry is preceded by Samuel Johnson and followed by Laura Bassi.

genre truly flourished from the late eighteenth century onwards.[15] In these publications a visual and a written portrait had become two essential components. Viewing a portrait was considered a vital part of remembering a person even though, as pointed out by Draper, the portraits themselves could be rather nondescript.[16]

In 1909 one-hundred years had passed since the death of Zoëga. To mark the occasion a "Mindefest"—a commemorative celebration—was held at the University of Copenhagen, with speeches by classical philologist Anders Bjørn Drachmann and Egyptologist Hans Ostenfeld Lange.

Within the auspices of the university, such commemorative events were by no means customary.[17] The initiative came from the brewer Carl Jacobsen (1842–1914), founder of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and a figure of the outmost importance in Danish cultural life at the time.

A clay model was on display at the celebration.[18] This was a preparatory step in the making of the large bronze sculpture of Zoëga, which is now placed alongside the northwest façade of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (fig. 7.1). Almost four meters high, it is the most imposing image of Zoëga (or any other Danish antiquarian!) ever made but it has hitherto received little scholarly attention.

The finished sculpture was set up in 1911 as a public monument donated to the city of Copenhagen by Carl Jacobsen. The artist was Ludvig Brandstrup (1861–1935), whom the brewer had previously employed. Brandstrup was trained in the neoclassical style but was later influenced by French naturalism.

The statue shows Zoëga doing his characteristic fieldwork, which many of his contemporaries had witnessed or participated in.[19] He is shown sitting on a tree stump with his brimmed hat lying casually on the ground. In his outstretched hand he holds up a small figurine, seemingly an antiquity discovered on the spot. This type of rendering—where the sitter appears as if caught in a 'spirited' moment—was a favoured model in contemporary art.[20]

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15 See for instance R. Nyerup, *Samling af fortjente danske Mænds Portrætter med biografiske Efterretninger*, I–III, (Kiøbenhavn: G.L. Lahde, 1797–1802).

16 J.D. Draper, "Thirty famous people. Drawings by Sergent-Marceau and Bosio, Milan, 1815–1818", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 13 (1978), 113.

17 A.B. Drachmann, *Udvalgte Afhandlinger*, (Kjøbenhavn – Kristiania: Gyldendal Nordisk Forlag, 1911), 215 and 231 ("Georg Zoëga").

18 Letter from Brandstrup to Carl Jacobsen, 29.4. 1910. By kind permission of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. Two models exist: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. n. I.N. 1735 and Hirschsprungske Samling, inv. n. 4043.

19 A.D. Jørgensen, *Georg Zoega. Et Mindeskrift*, (København: Samfundet til den danske literaturs fremme, 1881), 132–133.

20 E.J. Bencard, "Generationen uden egenskaber", in *Afmagt. Dansk billedhuggerkunst 1850–1900*, (København: Thorvaldsens Museum, 2002), 9–35.

The figurine in Zoëga's hand is not, as could perhaps be expected, in the Egyptian style. As noted by Bencard and Friborg, it is rather a piece alluding to ancient Greece.[21] My recent observations of the sculpture support this interpretation.[22] The frontal body position, slanting eyes and smile suggest an archaic *kore* (fig. 7.2). Brandstrup had already used a similar model in 1905 for a sculpture entitled *Morning*—here perhaps to express a conceptual link between dawn and early sculpture.[23] Brandstrup's use of the archaic style aligns well with contemporary trends in artist circles, where alternatives to the traditional classical models were sought for. In France, the salon culture had developed a particular fascination with the tanagra figurines, epitomized in the sculpture *Tanagra*, 1890 by Jean-Léon Gérôme.[24] The Danish artists Joachim Skovgaard (1856–1933) and Jens Ferdinand Willumsen (1863–1958) also deserve mention in this context.

It yet remains to be determined whether or not Brandstrup had any biographical motivations for choosing this particular figurine but some suggestions can be made. The archaic can be seen as a transition between the Egyptian and the classical style, an aspect which ties well with Zoëga's scholarly interests. Secondly, the figurine has the appearance of an authentic, archaeological 'specimen'. This could, tentatively, be interpreted as a reference to Zoëga's well-established reputation as "the great founder of scientific archaeology"—as he was described in 1909.[25]

Throughout its history, this statue of Zoëga has formed an active part in the Copenhagen cityscape. In order to understand how it was originally perceived by the public, it is necessary to consider its historical context and the spatial layout of its surroundings.

The present position of the statue is secondary, the result of a major modernization in the 1950s.[26] The original setting chosen for the statue in 1911 was

21 E.J. Bencard, F. Friborg, *Danish sculpture around 1900*, (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1995), 70.

22 I wish to thank the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek for facilitating access to the statue.

23 J.S. Østergaard, "Semper Ardens: Facaden af Hack Kampmanns bygning til Glyptotekets antikke samling", AIGIS Supplementum 1: Festskrift til Gorm Tortzen (2011), 6. (http://aigis.igl.ku.dk/CGT/Jan_Stubbe.pdf).

24 *Tanagra. Mythe et archéologie*, (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux – RMN, 2003), 36–65.

25 "den store Grundlægger af Arkæologien som Videnskab", F. Poulsen, "Georg Zoëga", *Ord och Bild* XVIII (1909), 539.

26 For the statue in its present position see: http://kk.sites.itera.dk/apps/kk_monumenter/index.asp?lang=uk&mode=detalje&id=81.

far from random. It was near the front of the entrance to the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and *vis-à-vis* a statue of the Danish-German painter Asmus Jakob Carstens (1754–1798).[27] This sculpture, made in 1880 by artist Theobald Stein, was also a donation from Carl Jacobsen to the City of Copenhagen.[28] Carstens, who was an acquaintance of Zoëga, had similarly served as a source of inspiration for Thorvaldsen. The two statues then faced each other—painter and scholar—united by their Roman legacy and their influence on Thorvaldsen.

However, the geographical origin of the two men must also be considered. In his speech at the commemoration, Drachmann strongly emphasized Zoëga's patriotic sentiments and his "Danishness".[29] Zoëga was born in Møgeltønder and Carstens in Schleswig [Slesvig]. Both towns were situated in the southern part of Denmark that had been lost in the traumatic Second Schleswig War in 1864 and only partly returned by a referendum shortly after the First World War.[30] Thus, in 1880 when the statue of Carstens was finished, and in 1910 when the sculpture of Zoëga was completed, both men originally born in Denmark now—since 1864—appeared as born in Germany.

The statue of Carstens was, in Carl Jacobsen's own words, a deliberate act of spite—done in order to reclaim Carstens from the Germans.[31] The commemoration of Georg Zoëga is very likely to be motivated by similar sentiments. Assuredly, the question of the Southern borderland permeated the public debate at the time, and feelings of loss and despair were abundant. The Danish critic Georg Brandes (1842–1927) wrote about this loss in "The Importance of Southern Jutland for Danish Culture". Carstens and Zoëga are both mentioned here, and their role as mentors for Thorvaldsen is emphasized.[32]

The statues of Carstens and Zoëga were prominently situated. The area around the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek was part of the new expansion of the city—outside the medieval walls. Modelled on the urban development in Paris and in Vienna of the *fin de siècle*, the area was characterized by new public buildings

27 "I anledning af 100-året for Zoëgas død kunne man opstille hans statue vis-a-vis Carstens." Minutes, board meeting, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 10. sept. 1908. I owe this reference to Mette Moltesen.

28 In its early years the statue stood at Jacobsen's house in Valby. The brewer had envisioned the statue to be placed by Thorvaldsens Museum but due to critical voices this idea was abandoned. H.E. Nørregård-Nielsen, *Ny Carlsbergfondet 1902–2002*, (København: Gyldendal, 2002), 84 and 87–88.

29 Drachmann, "Georg Zoëga", 231.

30 The referendum returned Møgeltønder to Denmark while Schleswig remained German.

31 Nørregård-Nielsen, *Ny Carlsbergfondet*, 87–88.

32 G. Brandes, *Samlede Skrifter*, XII, (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1902), 247–249 ("Sønderjyllands Betydning for dansk Kultur, 1901").

and broad boulevards. Sculptures and monuments were an integral part of such European cityscapes, with their emphasis on nation building, democratic values and education of the public.[33]

The statues of Carstens and Zoëga were included in the grounds of the Vestre Boulevard (now H.C. Andersens Boulevard), a broad and tranquil space with gardens in the middle. The area was a favored spot for promenading.[34]

In the 1950s the design of the cityscape was fundamentally altered. Vestre Boulevard was transformed into a multi-lane carriageway leading to the island of Amager. Most of the gardens were demolished and statues had to be removed. In 1954 the statues of Carstens and Zoëga were placed on either side of the Glyptotek buildings and could no longer be viewed simultaneously.[35] Had the Danish loss of 1864 given meaning to the remembrance of Carstens and Zoëga, the shadows cast by the Second World War, in turn, had decisively caused such meaning to fade away.

One of the latest known depictions of Zoëga is a painting from 1919 by Valdemar Neiiendam (1870–1956) entitled *Thorvaldsen at the deathbed of Zoëga*.[36] From about 1907 Neiiendam began specializing in paintings of historically important Danes, and his production within this genre was prolific.[37] Neiiendam was a late representative of the genre of history painting. Bordering on the trivial and the nostalgic, his works are recreations of pivotal moments in history. True to the format of history painting, the importance is not so much directed at portraying the individual, but on the ideas and the historical continuity represented in the subject.

The deathbed is a potent and archetypical motif in art. In Neiiendam's version the emphasis is on the interrelation between Zoëga and Thorvaldsen. The artist sits at the side of Zoëga's bed, his gaze attentively directed at the dying man, as if the spirit is to be passed on from one to another. Conceptually,

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33 Carl Jacobsen also instigated a fund for sculpture in the public realm, the Albertina Foundation, in 1879.

34 B. Bramsen, C. Jørgensen, *København. Før, nu—og aldrig*, IX, (København: Palle Fogtdal, 1990), 456–472.

35 *Betænkning* [...] *vedrørende omlægning m.v. af H.C. Andersens Boulevard*, 29. November 1960. Jens Peter Munk, Keeper of public monuments, City of Copenhagen, kindly facilitated this information.

36 Ribe Kunstmuseum, inv. n. RKM 142. I would like to thank Jan Gorm Madsen for assistance. Little has been written about Neiiendam's life and work. See *Weilbach. Dansk Kunstnerleksikon*, VI, (København: Munksgaard – Rosinante, 1997), 79–80 for references. For the painting see: https://www.kulturarv.dk/kid/VisVaerk.do?vaerkId=207098.

37 A list of Neiiendam's works from 1894 to 1944 can be found in H. Chr. Christensen, *Fortegnelse over Billeder malet af Valdemar Neiiendam 1894–1944*, (Helsingør, 1944).

Neiiendam's painting was produced beyond any living memory of the event, and Zoëga and Thorvaldsen had both become remote figures of the past.

Images of Zoëga?

The prophecy of Friis from 1904 regarding lost images of Zoëga being recovered came true only ten years later. In 1914 at an exhibition in Darmstadt a portrait of "Der Archeologe Zoega" surfaced.[38] The owner was art historian Carl Gebhardt (1881–1934) from Frankfurt. In 1960 the painting was acquired by the Museum of National History, Frederiksberg Castle.[39] It is signed "Rome A 1787". The identity of the artist is unknown. Øjvind Andreasen had initially been cautious about the identification with Zoëga, as there was no previous history to the painting. These doubts seem to have been overcome at the time *Georg Zoega. Breife und Dokumente* was published in 1967, as the painting is used as a frontispiece here.[40]

The painting has a strikingly intimate feel. The sitter is dressed in a simple brown coat and open shirt and he is wigless. He holds a partly open book in one hand. The painting calls to mind Raphael Mengs' portrait of Winckelmann reading the Iliad (ca. 1777) but in contrast the Frederiksborg painting lacks any such biographical references.

The sitter is shown with a bearded chin and down-cast eyes. Both of these aspects potentially link the image with the religious sphere. Dyveke Helsted has suggested that the motif is indeed not Zoëga, but rather Benedict Joseph Labre (1748–1783), a Franciscan monk and later saint.[41]

According to tradition, a painting by Zoëga's friend and neighbor Carlo Labruzzi (1748–1817), has been identified as a portrait of Zoëga. The painting was previously in Ludwig Pollak's collection and is now in Museo di Roma.[42] It shows the sitter dressed in classical robes and surrounded by ruins and antiquities, symbolically pointing at a head of Minerva, which is lying at his feet, a sign of knowledge and learning. A somewhat similar composition can be

38 G. Biermann, *Deutsches Barock und Rokoko*, II, (Leipzig: E.E. Schwabach, 1914), xx and 506, n. 863.

39 Inv. n. A 7455.

40 The shape of the nose apparently served as a determining factor when compared to the death mask of Zoëga, THMA, http://www.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en/collections/soeg?order=&q=L653 (Thorvaldsens Museum, inv. n. L653). Museum register, inv. n. A 7455.

41 D. Helsted, "Er det Zoëga?", *Sfinx* 8 (1986), n. 3, 104–106. I wish to thank Tobias Fischer-Hansen for this reference. Helsted is supported by Povl Eller. Museum register, inv. n. A 7455.

42 Museo di Roma, inv. n. MR 45669.

found in Tischbein's famous *Goethe in the Campagna* from 1787. The absence of any conclusive biographical features is again notable. The identification of the painting as a portrait of Zoëga has been argued by Hartmann.[43]

These recovered portraits associated with Zoëga primarily testify to a Zoëga remembered and to the role of the image in this process. Both paintings set Zoëga in an inspiring and suggestive ambience, which is not found in the images by Cabott and Thorvaldsen. This was, and is, decisively part of their attraction, yet the story they might tell remains amputated because of the lack of historical verification.

Georg Zoëga, the unwilling subject, has a long history of being depicted. A history which is both surprisingly typologically varied and complex, ranging from contemporary satire, heroic profiles, recovered images to political propaganda and romantic nationalism. Much of Zoëga's visual history is interwoven with that of his *protégé* Bertel Thorvaldsen, and it might be worth exploring if their history of being remembered by posterity is perhaps comparable.

Today Zoëga is best known as a pioneering scholar within the field of early Egyptology, and his burning interest in this subject is well attested elsewhere in this volume. This aspect is entirely absent in the visual rendering of him.

FIGURE 7.1 *Statue of Georg Zöega by Ludvig Brandstrup, 1910, in its original setting. Used postcard (by Alex. Vincent's Kunstforlag) from c. 1938. Property of the author.*

43 J.B. Hartmann, "Appunti su Giorgio Zoega e Carlo Labruzzi", *Studi Romani* 24.3 (1976), 352–368. E. di Majo, B. Jørnaes, S. Susinno, *Bertel Thorvaldsen 1770–1844, scultore danese a Roma*, (Roma: De Luca, 1989), 144, Fig. 10.

FIGURE 7.2 *Statue of Georg Zöega by Ludvig Brandstrup, 1910. Property of the City of Copenhagen. Detail of figurine. Photo: Anne Haslund Hansen.*

CHAPTER 8

Georg Zoëga and Friedrich Münter. The Significance of Their Relationship*

Tobias Fischer-Hansen

Introduction

Georg Zoëga is the only person mentioned by name by Friedrich Münter in the preface to his travel account *Nachrichten von Neapel und Sicilien*.[1]

After setting out the programme that lay behind his journey to Italy, undertaken primarily with the purpose of manuscript studies but including also wider studies in literature and art, Münter writes:

> Ich habe daher stets gesucht beide Endzwekke zu verbinden; Bibliotheken und die Welt zu sehen so viel mir möglich war (…). Meine übrige Zeit wandte ich an, theils die Antike zu studieren, wozu ich besonders in Rom die beste Gelegenheit dadurch hatte, dass ich das Wichtigste in Gesellschaft meines Freundes, Hr Georg Zoega, besah, dessen grosse antiquarische Einsichten hinreichend bekannt sind (…).[2]

Friedrich Münter

Friedrich Münter (fig. 8.1) was one of the giants of Danish scholarship of the eighteenth-nineteenth century.[3] His contributions within the fields of Coptic,

* Quotations from letters and other material are given here in their original language, apart from Danish which is translated into English.

1 F. Münter, *Nachrichten von Neapel und Sicilien auf einer Reise in den Jahren 1785 und 1786 gesammelt*, I–II, (Kopenhagen: Christian Gottlob Proft, 1790).

2 Ibid., iv–v.

3 Gotha (Germany) 1761—Copenhagen 1830. Studies with C.G. Heyne in Göttingen 1781–1784; Professor of Theology at the University of Copenhagen 1788–1807; bishop of the Diocese of Zealand and thus primate of the Danish Lutheran Church 1807–1830. Synthesis: E. Rosenstrauch-Königsberg, *Freimaurer, Illuminat, Weltbürger. Friedrich Münters Reisen und Briefe in ihren europäischen Bezügen*, (Berlin: Ulrich Camen, 1984).

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Church history, early Christian iconography, and the dogmatics of the Christian religion brought him renown in Europe. His work on Oriental studies, above all his study of Carthaginian religion, is still valued today, and his contribution to solving the riddle of cuneiform writing was recognised by Georg Friedrich Grotefend.

Münter was awarded a travel grant *ad usus publicos* in 1784 for manuscript studies with a view to a new edition of the New Testament. After a brief sojourn in Vienna, where he met Joseph Eckhel, he travelled south. In Venice he visited the Grimani and Nani collections. The latter housed Greek sculptures from the Peloponnese and the Ionian Islands, and Egyptian and Etruscan antiquities and, therefore, Münter was acquainted with these classes of material even before he saw Stefano Borgia's collection in Velletri. Münter began his stay in Rome in early 1785,[4] subsequently undertaking journeys to Naples, Southern Italy and Sicily in 1785–1786, returning to Copenhagen in 1787 and never seeing Italy again.

Several of Münter's scholarly contributions are mentioned in surveys of eighteenth century Danish scholarship, but it is noteworthy that his early, and profound interest in Italian archaeology and museology has, until recently, received little mention.[5]

Münter and Zoëga

We know that his first task after his arrival in Rome was to seek out Zoëga, and, the same day, to visit Cardinal Stefano Borgia: "[*scil*. Borgia] nahm mich mit offenen Armen auf, fasste mich bey beyden Ohren, u. küsste mich. (…), spöttelte einiges über meine Reise nach Pistoja, u. versprach mir viel Arbeit in Koptischen Sachen". Apparently rumours of Münter's association with Scipione Ricci, the hated Jansenist reformist bishop of Pistoja, had already reached the

4 Ø. Andreasen, "Kardinal Borgia og de Danske i Rom", in *Rom og Danmark gennem Tiderne*, I, redigeret af L. Bobé, (København: Levin & Munksgaard, 1935), 294–302; Italian translation by M.A. Zocchi in R. Langella (a cura di), *Stefano Borgia e i danesi a Roma*, Centro Internazionale di Studi Borgiani—Quaderni 1, (Velletri: Edizioni tra 8 & 9, 2000), 46–52.

5 T. Fischer-Hansen, "La conoscenza dell'Italia meridionale e della Sicilia greca in Danimarca nel Settecento: Frederik Münter e Saverio Landolina", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 28 (2001), 35–64.

papal city and caused some indignation. But Borgia's rather relaxed relationship with his Nordic, Protestant collaborators is again noteworthy.[6]

Münter was undoubtedly Zoëga's main correspondent through the years 1785 to 1808. The correspondence is extensive, but also, it has to be admitted, to some extent insubstantial as regards content. Münter was a fanatical collector of coins, and his persistent demands for even more specimens is tiring in itself, but also takes up considerable letter space on the part of Zoëga, who has to keep abreast of acquisitions, account for expenses and, not least, deal with problems of shipment. The same goes for Münter's eager acquisitions for the enlargement of his library. There are interesting exchanges on the minting of coins, problems of identification of mints, and we are kept abreast with antiquarian publications. However, the major concern of Münter is acquisition.

Münter's concern for Zoëga's situation after his marriage to Maria Petruccioli was shared by the whole Münter household—also by his sister Friederike Brun, née Münter, and not least by their father Balthasar Münter, Pastor at the German Reformed Church in Copenhagen. Zoëga had visited the Münter household in May 1779, where he became quite infatuated with Münter's sister.[7]

In a letter to his sister, Münter remarks on the situation in which Zoëga finds himself: "that Zoëga has gone over to the Catholic faith is a stupid trick". Münter is at a loss as to what can be done, a change back to Lutheranism is hardly feasible, a repudiation of his step and subsequent absolution by the Copenhagen establishment is also difficult to envisage. Münter has no sympathy for the path chosen by Zoëga, but he will take up the matter with the culprit. After his arrival in Rome, he seems somewhat mollified—"(…) [*scil.* Zoëga] can after all be a good fellow—although he believes the pope to be the paramount Bishop of Christianity". Münter has also a lengthy and quite moving defence of religious differences:

> I am a great enemy of changes in religious belief, but equally so of religious disputes, which are in large measure only about words and scholastic trifles, and history has taught me what devices, during all such disputes and quarrels, have brought about the triumph of this or that teaching. There is all the difference in the world between religion and

6 Münter's diary: Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Aus den Tagebüchern Friedrich Münters. Wander-und Lehrjahre eines dänischen Gelehrten*, I, (Kopenhagen: P. Haase & Sohn, 1937), 254–255.

7 For Friederike Brun and Zoëga see now A. Müller, *Sehnsucht nach Wissen. Friederike Brun, Elisa von der Recke und die Altertumskunde um 1800*, (Berlin: Reimer, 2012).

> theology, and it is not possible that two can come to an agreement on one single matter.[8]

Zoëga, chosen for the post as curator of the Royal Coin Collection by the Royal Chamberlain Ove Høegh Guldberg, had been awarded a travel grant in 1782 for a two-year study tour of the more important European coin collections, and a stay in Vienna with the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of the basics of ancient numismatics with Joseph Eckhel.

Zoëga fulfilled this first chapter of his obligations—during his sojourn in Vienna he compiled transcripts and reports of Eckhel's numismatic classifications, and in Rome he catalogued the Alexandrian coins in Stefano Borgia's collection.[9] However, as we know, Zoëga never went further than Italy, and it is in this conflict of loyalty and during the subsequent attempts at extricating himself that Münter comes to play a role.

The friendship of the Münter household toward Zoëga is apparent from Balthasar Münter's letters to his son in Rome. Münter senior had taken it upon himself to clarify the situation of Zoëga with the authorities in Copenhagen, and the Münters were faithful friends and intermediaries between the, at times, dejected scholar in Rome and the, by and large, benevolent authorities in Copenhagen. In case he was unable to take up the appointment as Curator of the Royal Coin Collection, they worked for the option of offering him a consulship in the Papal States. But hovering in background is the prospect that a withdrawal by Zoëga would afford Münter the opportunity to take up the appointment in Copenhagen.[10] In Münter's diary he mentions his work copying Zoëga's papers.[11] The Münter manuscript cited by Goethe in his *Italienische Reise* 29 Dez. 1786: "Schöne Münzen hat [*scil*. Münter] gesammelt und besitzt, wie er mir sagte, ein Manuskript, welches die Münzwissenschaft auf scharfe

8 Münter's view of Zoëga's change of faith: in letters to his sister Friederike Brun, written from Pisa January 1785 and subsequently from Rome; Danish transcripts in C.L.N. Mynster, *Meddelelser fra Frederik Münter's og Frederikke Münter's Ungdom*, (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendal, 1883), 47, 53.

9 For the progress of his studies in Vienna see: Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, I, (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), letter n. 195, and for his later contacts with Eckhel: Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), letters nn. 275, 309, 314, and others. Zoëga's correspondence will be cited after these two volumes.

10 Letters of B. and F. Münter: letters nn. 293–294, 303–308, 338. The appointment was in the end assigned to Christian Ramus, 1801, a scholar not highly regarded by Münter and Zoëga.

11 Münter, *Tagebüchern*, II, 215, 252.

Kennzeichen, wie die Linnéschen sind, zuruckführt", was, in fact, the transcript of Zoëga's preparatory work on Eckhel's numismatic classifications.

As we know from the correspondence Zoëga was often irresolute, but he is also at times irritated by Münter's zealousness, and perhaps even interference. This seems to emerge from his letters—for instance to the Danish scholar Andreas Birch, March 1786, regarding the prospect of becoming Danish agent or consul in Rome—"(...) Intanto [*scil*. Münter] fa male di parlarne, non dico a Voi, ma come suppongo a tutta la città, perche chi ha molti conoscenti per lo piu è ciarlone", and in a letter to Birch, November 1786, in regard to Münter—"non so come s'è inserito negli affari miei, non aspettato, non richiesto, onde dal suo zelo qualche cosa speravo, ma temo ora che finirà in ciarle".[12]

The preoccupation of Münter with Zoëga's situation reappears later when, after his return to Copenhagen, he works hard to persuade Zoëga to take up the professorship in Kiel, with a direct appeal to Count Friedrich Reventlow, Curator of the university.[13] The preoccupations of Zoëga, regarding the general situation of his family, the fear of how the cold climate will affect the health of his wife and his children, and the language problem, are outlined again and again in his correspondence, above all with Münter.[14]

Scientific Crossroads

The wide respect held for both Zoëga and Münter is evident from nearly every page of their vast correspondences with contemporary antiquarian scholars.

Münter, though a protestant, was well received and supported in the Catholic environment, not only by Cardinal Borgia but also by Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi, Keeper of the Papal Archives and Nuncio in Vienna.[15] The gratitude of the Danish scholars in Rome is perhaps best expressed in a letter to Garampi from J.G.C. Adler (Rome 1781):

12 Zoëga to Birch: letters nn. 284, 315.

13 See Münter's correspondence with Count Reventlow, 1801: Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Aus dem Briefwechsel Friedrich Münters. Europäische Beziehungen eines dänischen Gelehrten*, II, (Kopenhagen: P. Haase & Sohn, 1944), nn. 493–494.

14 Several letters covering the period spring 1801–summer 1803.

15 For Giuseppe Garampi and his Danish contacts see D. Vanysacker, "The erudite activities and contacts of Papal Nuncio Giuseppe Garampi in Warsaw and Vienna, 1772–1785", *LIAS* 20 (1993), 121–166: 146–153.

> Non mi ricordo, d'esser mai stato più allegro e più contento che a Roma. Eccome non si starebbe contento nella erudita e impareggiabile conversazione d'un Monsigno Borgia, d'un Abate Amaduzzi, d'un Padre Giorgi.[16]

Cardinal Garampi became acquainted with Münter in Vienna, and recommends him to the scholarly circles in Rome—"Vous sçavez deja le favorable prejugé, dont jouit a Rome chez nos communs amis, tout sçavant Danois. Vous ne faites que l'augmenter. (…)".[17]

Münter and Zoëga formed part of a wide network of archaeologists, historians and numismatists, individually or by mention in their mutual correspondence:

A *select* list comprises:

Librarians at the Papal institutions: G.C. Amaduzzi, the Progadanda Fide office; Abbot G. Simonio Assemani, colleague of J.G.C. Adler, Münter and Zoëga in Kufic Studies.
Linguists: J.D. Åkerblad; I. De Rossi; A.-L. Millin.
Roman and Latial topographers and archaeologists: C. Fea; A. Hirt;[18] E.Q. Visconti; J.D.W. von Uhden.
Historians and philologists: K.A. Böttiger; G.F. Creuzer; J.C. Siebenkees; F.G. Welcker.
Collectors: A.G. Nani; W. Hamilton.
Numismatists: D. Sestini.
Sicilian and Southern Italian antiquarians: G.L. Castelli, Principe di Torremuzza; I. Paternò Castello, Principe di Biscari; S. Landolina Nava; G. Capece Latro; T. Vargas (-Macciuca).
Geologists and natural historians: J.F. Blumenbach; I. Born; D. de Dolomieu; G. Wad.
Travellers: R. Chandler; C. Niebuhr.
Authors: W. Goethe; J. G and C. Herder; F.L. von Stolberg.

From the correspondence we gather that Münter is Zoëga's main sparring partner, to use a modern term.[19]

16 Letter transcribed in Vanysacker, "The erudite activities", 161.

17 Münter, *Briefwechsel*, 1, n. 236.

18 For Aloys Hirt, Münter and Zoëga see now Müller, *Sehnsucht nach Wissen*, 295–318, 327.

19 For Zoëga's scientific aspiration see above all K. Friis Johansen, "Georg Zoega og Rom", in *Rom og Danmark*, 1, 223–267: 254–259, a brilliant treatise unfortunately not translated

> My dear Münter, you know the character of my efforts and intentions,—that I view and treat the antiquarian sciences differently from the mechanical *Antiqvarii*: that it is my ambition to use them [the antiquarian sciences] to cast light on the darkest history, to correct our understanding of the origin of knowledge and customs, and thereby explain the influence of earlier times on our present situation. (…) This I can accomplish *here* where the monuments are so many and varied (…).[20]

In the correspondence between Münter and Zoëga we find also mention of Zoëga's aspirations to depict the ancient monuments not in their restored beauty but as they are now with all their imperfections

> I visit [*scil.* Borgia] nearly daily these days while he is engaged in having his Egyptian antiquities illustrated, I must render assistance to make sure the drawings are accurate (…) to make sure they surpass all previous prints in accuracy. (…) It is time consuming, but I believe that what is most useful in this class of object, is to present the world with pictures of the highest exactitude. We can all interpret, but few people have sufficient patience to lay forth the pure text.[21]

Such an objective is so brilliantly fulfilled in *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma*. To understand Zoëga's aspirations to upgrade archaeology within antiquarian scholarship see his letter to the Danish historian P.F. Suhm, October 1791.[22] Here Zoëga outlines his aspirations to analyse ancient monuments in their state of imperfection, without additions or restorations; far from discussing the monuments according to one's own taste one must undertake a detailed analysis, although such a study is laborious. He laments the lack of accurate catalogues and descriptions, and, famously, criticises Winckelmann for disregarding the true state of the monuments. However, it must be pointed out that the value of such scientific approaches was already shared by others: Münter

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into a major language. However, its main contents can be found in J. Mejer, "Welcker and Zoëga", in *Friedrich Gottlob Welcker. Werk und Wirkung*, Hermes Einzelschr. 49, herausgegeben von W. Calder *et al.*, (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986), 53–78.

20 Letter n. 338.

21 Letter n. 548.

22 Letter n. 534, in Danish, an English translation is given by Mejer, "Welcker and Zoëga", 61–62.

himself has in his *Nachrichten* (1790) an analysis of an earlier misinterpreted *tabula isiaca* in Bologna—

> (…) eine Tabula Isiaca von Basalt, voll von Figuren und Hieroglyphen, aus welcher Winkelman hat beweisen wollen, dass die Fabel von den Centauren egyptischen Urspunge sey; aber nicht bemerkt hat, dass die Figur, auf welche er sich gründet, eine neue Restauration ist.[23]

Museum Münterianum

Georg Zoëga had been assigned the registration of Cardinal Borgia's Egyptian objects, and Münter, for his part, published Borgia's collection of Coptic manuscripts thus becoming familiar with one of the most comprehensive collections in Europe at that time. The learned society, *Accademia Volsca*, revolving around Borgia's Museum in Velletri, was an academy to which Münter was elected a member.

After the death of Borgia in 1804 Zoëga and Münter engaged themselves eagerly in the project of saving Borgia's collections from being split up. The importance of Borgia's collection for Münter's project on his return to Copenhagen cannot be underestimated. But familiarity with the collections in Sicily was also important. The Biscari Collection in Catania, primarily the creation of Ignazio Paternò Castello di Biscari, was innovative. The aims of the museum were ambitious, not least in relation to the earlier *Kunst-* or *Wunderkammer*. The systematic arrangement of the material, the planned architectural framework, the attention paid to provenance, to topography, to history and context, and the arrangement according to classes and typology, were all exceptional phenomena for this period.[24] The Biscari Museum was an outstanding product of the Age of Enlightenment, a "museo democratico" as coined by G. Pucci citing the inscription on the medal struck by Prince

23 Münter, *Nachrichten*, II, 619.

24 S. Pafumi, Museum Biscarianum. *Materiali per lo studio delle collezioni di Ignazia Paternò Castello di Biscari* (*1719–1786*), (Catania: Alma, 2006). For Münter and the Biscari collection: T. Fischer-Hansen, "Frederik Münter in Syracuse and Catania in 1786: Antiquarian legislation and connoisseurship in 18th century Sicily", in *Oggetti, uomini, idee. Percorsi multidisciplinari per la storia del collezionismo*, a cura di G. Giarrizzo, S. Pafumi, (Pisa – Roma: Fabrizio Serra, 2009), 117–137.

Biscari at the inauguration of his museum—PUBLICAE UTILITATI / PATRIAE DECORI / STUDIOSORUM COMMODO (…).[25]

Inspired by his experiences in Italy, Münter assembled his own collection on his return to Copenhagen. His museum, though financed from his private means, was to be "entirely public" and "for the favour of fellow citizens"[26] in the spirit of Biscari's objective. Zoëga's contributions to the *Museum Münterianum* were primarily within the following fields:

Inscriptions. In one of his letters to Zöega Münter writes: "please send me urgently Egyptian fragments with hieroglyphic writing and also Etrurian letters, even if just on burnt pottery."[27] He shared with Zoëga the interest in hieroglyphs, and had early on recognised Zöega's capabilities—"Ich weiß nicht ob ich Ihnen in Weimar sagte, daß meiner Freunde in Rom [Zoëga] sehr auf dem Wege ist, die alte egyptische hierogrammatische Schrift zu entziffern" he writes in an early letter to J.G. Herder.[28] The importance of the Rosetta Stone for the decipherment of hieroglyphic writing was obviously recognised early on by both Zoëga and Münter.[29]

Smaller categories, such as Roman provincial inscriptions, tile stamps ("Legionensteine"), and Hellenistic Greek sling-bullets with letters were from the Nani Collection in Venice.[30] We know from Zöega's letters to Borgia that he had spent considerable time in the Palazzo Nani examining Egyptian, and Greek collections and copying inscriptions.[31] He also forwarded a number of publications of the collection to Münter, the last as late as 1807.

Italic terracottas. In one of his reports to Crown Prince Frederik, Zöega gives an analysis of the distinct artistic level of Greek and Etruscan sculpture, drawing attention to recently found 6th century BC terracotta friezes, from a temple at Velletri, in the Borgia museum.[32] Volscian terracotta sculpture, understood as examples of *Italic art*, had recently caught the interest of antiquarians, as

25 G. Pucci, *Il passato prossimo. La scienza dell'antichità alle origini della cultura moderna*, (Roma: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1993), 47–49.

26 Citations from Münter's own catalogue to his collection.

27 Letter n. 1142.

28 Münter, *Briefwechsel*, I, n. 339; see also letter to Ph. A. Grouvelle in Ibid., n. 279 for his respect for Zoëga's scholarship.

29 Letters nn. 853, 995, 1142; Münter, *Briefwechsel*, I, n. 279 and II, nn. 516, 519–521.

30 Münter to Creuzer: Ibid., I, nn. 177 and 180.

31 For Danish scholars in Venice in this period see S. Ferrari, "Libri, storia e *Altertumswissenschaft*. Amadeo Svaier e gli eruditi danesi a Venezia sul finire del Settecento", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 28 (2001), 135–152.

32 Letter n. 391.

we can gather also from a previous letter from Joseph Eckhel to Zöega.[33] In this context the architectural terracotta-friezes from Velletri, acquired by Münter as a gift from Borgia, are of special interest.[34] They were the first examples of Archaic art exhibited in Copenhagen, and are now in the Danish National Museum and in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.[35]

Gems. Zoëga forwards an impressive lists of specimens he recommends.[36] The specimens that are recognisable as acquisitions from Zoëga, now in the Danish National Museum, are the more interesting for bearing mythological motifs.[37]

Egyptian material. Various small objects were acquired through Zoëga, among these a fragment in basalt of a lion, now in the Danish National Museum.[38]

Geological samples of minerals and rock were also procured with the aid of Zoëga.[39]

Oldsagskommissionen

Münter conceived an ambition to register and describe all ancient objects, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman in the Royal *Kunstkammer* and in private ownership in Denmark (sparse as these were at the time). This ambition can be followed in his correspondence, above all with Georg Zöega and the German scholars Karl August Böttiger and Friedrich Creuzer, but also with Saverio Landolina in Syracuse. To the latter Münter outlines a program for his project referring in part to the famous collection of de Caylus and in part to the Sicilian scholar Gabriele Lancillotto Castelli, di Torremuzza, who like Caylus, had formulated a program of classification according to types of monuments in his *Idea di un tesoro, che contenga una generale raccolta di tutte le antichità*.[40]

This is the background for Münter's membership of the so-called *Oldsagskommission*—the commission set up in 1807 for the purpose of creat-

33 Letter n. 287.

34 Münter, *Tagebüchern*, I, 311–314 and II, 153–155.

35 *Catalogue Etruria* I, (Copenhagen: 2010), 126–129.

36 Letter n. 1195.

37 Inv. nn. M 1, 20, 23, 35, 45, 52, 54, 60, 65, 86, 88, 100–104, 117, 118, 123, 125, 127, 145.

38 Letter n. 1047: "*Fragmentum a basalte viridi. Caput et truncus leonis operis aegyptii*". Department of Antiquities, inv. n. AAb 102.

39 Letters nn. 849 and 1142.

40 For Biscari, Borgia, de Caylus, Torremuzza and antiquarian scholarship see G. Salmeri, "L'arcipelago antiquario", in E. Vaiani (a cura di), *Dell'antiquaria e dei suoi metodi*, (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 1998), 257–280.

ing a platform for legislation regarding the preservation of ancient remains in Denmark and the creation of a Museum of Danish Antiquities.[41] It is Münter who draws attention to the destruction of ancient monuments and structures and it is he who takes the initiative to establish a museum for relics such as runic stones and early Nordic antiquities. It is relevant in our perspective that through the years 1807 and 1808 Münter briefed Zöega in long, carefully formulated letters, on his innovative and ambitious ideas, and his aspirations. Münter's key points of view are: provision should be made to prevent the systematic vandalism from running out of control, steps should be taken to collect information and to draw up reports concerning the extant remains from the Nordic Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Münter puts forward suggestions in regard to the establishment of a State Museum for all Antiquities—to which *all* [Münter's emphasis] ancient objects in the Royal Collections should be transferred—to the benefit of the general public.

Münter, in fact, invited Zöega to become a member of the *Oldsagskommission*, but Zoëga found it inconvenient as he was still working on his *magnum opus*—"I am now *tutto bassorilievo*", as he tells Münter.[42]

From a letter to Herman Schubart we gather that he is not inclined to take part in the projects in Copenhagen—closing with this, ironic (?), lamentation:

> Pour mes basreliefs on y renonce jusqu'à la conclusion de la paix. (…). Cependant il me demande une lettre à la Commission des Antiquités Septentrionales. Mais que leur dois-je écrire? ici je ne decouvre aucune trace de cette espece d'antiquité, ni même je n'ai les livres qui les regardent, et s'il y en eût où trouve-je le tems pour m'y appliquer? Je n'ai pas la volubilité de son [*scil*. Münter's] genie de passer de l'histoire ecclesiastique aux inscriptions de Persepolis, des médailles des rois d'Afrique et de Chypre à la description du bombardement de Copenhague.[43] Je l'admire, mais je sais pas l'imiter. Je ne fais gueres qu'une chose à la fois, et je ne réuscis pas même à faire de ma satisfaction.[44]

41 Project outlined in letters to Zoëga, 1807–1808, letters nn. 1213, 1226, 1258 and others.

42 Letter n. 1230.

43 That of the British, September 1807. In fact the situation was very dramatic for Münter, his home in Copenhagen suffered damages and his house in the country was burned down: letter to K.A. Böttiger, Münter, *Briefwechsel*, n. 61.

44 Letter n. 1251.

FIGURE 8.1 *Portrait of the young Friedrich Münter in Rome 1786 by Johan Herman Cabott. Commissioned by Cardinal Borgia for his residence in the Palazzo Altemps, Rome.*

Zoëga and Numismatic Studies

CHAPTER 9

Zoëga studente di numismatica. Il soggiorno a Vienna (1782) e i contatti con Joseph Eckhel

Daniela Williams and Bernhard Woytek[1]

Il tirocinio numismatico fatto a Vienna nel 1782 è ricordato dallo stesso Georg Zoëga nella sua unica opera dedicata interamente alla numismatica—*Numi Aegyptii imperatorii*.[2] Questo volume sulle monete imperiali alessandrine, giustamente celebrato all'epoca della sua apparizione,[3] rimane ancora oggi, nonostante la presenza di molti studi più recenti,[4] un lavoro monumentale per la quantità di materiale raccolto e il valore delle note di commento.[5] Nell'indice dei musei e delle pubblicazioni alla base di questo studio, Zoëga menziona il periodo viennese e fa riferimento alla cordialità e grande generosità dimostratagli da Joseph Hilarius Eckhel (1737–1798),[6] suo maestro e guida.[7]

1 Questo studio rientra nel progetto "Joseph Eckhel (1737–1798) and his numismatic network (*Fontes Inediti Numismaticae Antiquae*—Vienna)", finanziato dal Fondo Austriaco per la Ricerca (FWF), Projektnummer P25282.

2 G. Zoëga, *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii prostantes in Museo Borgiano Velitris, adiectis praeterea quotquot reliqua huius classis numismata ex variis museis atque libris colligere obtigit*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1787), ix.

3 Si vedano la recensione in *Efemeridi Letterarie di Roma* 17 (1788), 89–91, tradotta in francese per la gazzetta *L'ésprit des journaux français et étrangers* 8 (Agosto 1788), 177–180, e il commento positivo in J. Eckhel, *Doctrina numorum veterum*, IV, (Vindobonae: sumptibus Josephi Vincentii Degen—Iosephi Camesina et comp., 1794), 25–26.

4 Per una breve storia degli studi si veda E. Christiansen, "From Zoëga to the present day. The Roman coins of Alexandria in 200 years of research", in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to Rudi Thomsen*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988), 232–242; A. Savio, *Numi Augg. Alexandrini. Catalogo della collezione Dattari*, (Trieste: Giulio Bernardi, 2007), xxv–xxvii.

5 E. Christiansen "The Alexandrian Coins before Zoëga", in *Florilegium Numismaticum. Studia in honorem U. Westermark edita*, edidit H. Nilsson, (Stockholm: Svenska Numismatiska Föreningen, 1992), 111–118. Si veda anche il contributo di Laurent Bricault in questo volume.

6 P.F. Mittag, "Eckhel, Joseph Hilarius", in *Geschichte der Altertumswissenschaften. Biographisches Lexikon*, Der Neue Pauly, Supplemente Band 6, herausgegeben von P. Kuhlman, H. Scheider, (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2012), cols. 341–343.

7 Zoëga, *Numi Aegyptii*, ix: "*In hoc museo excutiendo primum feci numismatices tirocinium anno 1782, duce & magistro ipso Eckhelio, qui incredibili comitate & liberalitate artis principia me edocuit*".

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Questo contributo si propone di indagare in dettaglio i cinque mesi (5 luglio–4 dicembre 1782) durante i quali Zoëga fu 'iniziato' alla numismatica antica e di seguire il suo percorso formativo in questa disciplina nonché le tappe che lo porteranno a realizzare la sua opera significativa. Verranno presi in considerazione: 1) lo scopo e i preparativi del viaggio; 2) l'attività svolta a Vienna e gli insegnamenti di Eckhel; 3) i contatti epistolari con Eckhel successivi al soggiorno viennese.

Finalità e preparativi del viaggio di studio (1781–1782)

L'occasione per un viaggio che avrebbe portato il giovane Zoëga a visitare diverse raccolte numismatiche europee era stata, nel marzo 1781, l'unificazione delle raccolte numismatiche danesi.[8] Il governo aveva individuato in Zoëga il futuro curatore di questa collezione che versava in gran disordine.[9] Il periodo di formazione prevedeva una durata di 2 anni (metà 1782–metà 1784)[10] durante i quali lo studioso danese avrebbe visitato Gottinga, la raccolta numismatica di Gotha,[11] e Vienna, dove avrebbe studiato per sei mesi con Joseph Eckhel. Si sarebbe poi diretto in Italia e Francia, e sarebbe tornato nei territori della Germania, per rientrare quindi a Copenhagen nell'estate 1784.[12] In patria egli avrebbe avuto il compito di ordinare il medagliere reale, selezionare i pezzi più rari ed interessanti per poi descriverli in dettaglio e pubblicarli in latino,[13] secondo una tradizione di studi in uso all'epoca.

8 Si veda J.S. Jensen, "Det kongelige Mønt- og Medaillekabinet fra 1652 til 1832", in *Den kongelige Mønt- og Medaillesamling 1781–1981*, redigeret af O. Mørkholm, (København: Nationalmuseet, 1981), 9–122, particolarmente 29–54; H. Horsnæs, "Johannes Wiedewelt Designer of Exhibitions", in *Johannes Wiedewelt. A Danish Artist in Search of the Past, Shaping the Future*, edited by M. Nielsen, A. Rathje, (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), 259–273.

9 O. Mørkholm, "The Danish Contribution to the Study of Ancient Numismatics 1789–1880", in *Den kongelige*, 123–164, specialmente 124.

10 Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, I, (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), lettera n. 167. Prima della partenza, Zoëga aveva catalogato alcune collezioni locali: Ibid., lettera n. 148.

11 La raccolta di Federico di Sassonia era stata celebrata nella pubblicazione di C. Liebe, *Gotha Numaria, sistens Thesauri Fridericiani Numismata Antiqua Aurea, Argentea, Ærea*, (Amstelædami: apud R. & J. Westenios & G. Smith, 1730).

12 Le istruzioni per il viaggio sono in Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettera n. 167.

13 Ibid., lettere nn. 142–143.

Una critica a questo tipo di pubblicazioni era emersa già nel settembre 1781 in una lettera importante indirizzata al suo ex-professore, Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812), nella quale Zoëga dimostrava di essere perfettamente consapevole dei problemi degli studi numismatici a lui contemporanei e individuava chiaramente i limiti dei testi a disposizione.[14] In particolare, egli esprimeva la necessità di repertori di riferimento e opere generali per lo studio delle monete antiche. Infatti, la tendenza della letteratura numismatica, specialmente per le monete greche, era stata quella di pubblicare 'supplementi', in assenza però di lavori generali: si studiavano non interi gabinetti, ma solo una scelta dei pezzi più rari. Zoëga si interrogava sull'utilità della pubblicazione di *nummi anecdoti* a discapito di quelli più comuni e del mezzo più efficace per giudicare la rarità dei pezzi.[15] A questo proposito, auspicava la creazione di un catalogo generale frutto della collazione del materiale proveniente dai principali gabinetti numismatici. Infine, Zoëga criticava la fedeltà delle riproduzioni grafiche nei libri di numismatica, individuando spesso discrepanze tra la descrizione dei tipi nel testo e le immagini incise nelle tavole: fattore che a suo parere contribuiva notevolmente a rendere inaffidabili persino opere di numismatici illustri.[16]

Quindi, già prima di partire per il suo viaggio di studio, Zoëga aveva chiare le principali difficoltà e carenze dello studio della numismatica antica di quel tempo.[17] Accompagnato da un manualetto sulle abbreviazioni delle legende

14 Ibid., lettera n. 148.

15 Si veda a proposito J. Eckhel, *Numi veteres anecdoti*, (Vindobonae: typis Josephi Kurzböck, 1775), [3v–4r], che considera monete *anecdotae* quelle mancanti nei repertori e opere maggiori.

16 Zoëga critica Jean-Foy Vaillant e Joseph Pellerin. Si veda anche quanto formulato nel 1791 sulla situazione dello studio delle antichità in generale, in Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, III, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), lettera n. 534.

17 Per lo studio della numismatica greca nel Settecento si veda O. Mørkholm, "A history of the study of Greek numismatics, I, 1760–1835. The foundations", *Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift* 1979–1980, 5–14; P. Kinns "Two Eighteenth-century studies of Greek coin hoards: Bayer and Pellerin", in *Medals and Coins from Budé to Mommsen*, edited by M.H. Crawford, C.R. Ligota, J.B. Trapp, (London: The Warburg Institute, 1990), 101–114. Per il XVI e XVII secolo si veda J. Kagan, "Notes on the Study of Greek Coins in the Renaissance", in *Translatio Nummorum. Römische Kaiser in der Renaissance*, herausgegeben von U. Peter, B. Weisser, (Berlin: Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2013), 57–70.

numismatiche,[18] e da due lettere di presentazione,[19] egli arrivava a Vienna all'inizio del luglio 1782.

Zoëga a Vienna (5 luglio–4 dicembre 1782)

Nel 1782, Joseph Eckhel, direttore della collezione imperiale di monete antiche e professore di numismatica e antichità all'università di Vienna, già godeva di fama internazionale per aver pubblicato una selezione di pezzi rari di diverse collezioni con commento, *Numi veteres anecdoti* (1775),[20] e il catalogo completo della raccolta Viennese *Catalogus musei Caesarei Vindobonensis* (1779).[21] Queste opere presentavano le monete imperiali disposte cronologicamente e quelle greche secondo un ordine geografico. Questa disposizione riprendeva il sistema adottato da Pellerin, apportando però delle modifiche importanti che permettevano di raggruppare insieme zecche appartenenti ad aree storicamente pertinenti, includendo ad esempio le isole del Mediterraneo nelle sezioni dedicate alle regioni a cui erano vicine.[22] In poche parole Eckhel si andava profilando come il maggiore studioso di numismatica del momento.

Nel medagliere imperiale Zoëga lavorava sei ore al giorno: visionava i cassetti con la collezione un gruppo alla volta, ma soprattutto si serviva di una serie di manoscritti fornitagli da Eckhel. Si trattava in parte di saggi già completi, in parte di studi in forma di bozze,[23] a cui il numismatico austriaco lavorava da diversi anni con l'intento di farne una grande opera che racchiudesse la quintessenza della numismatica. Questo lavoro doveva raccogliere tutte le informazioni possibili sulle monete (derivanti da pubblicazioni, collezioni,

18 *Lexicon abruptionum quae in numismatibus Romanorum occurrunt studiosae iuventuti ad explicandos numos adornatum variisque observationibus illustratum*, (Norimbergae: apud Christian. Gotthold. Hauffium, 1777); Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettera n. 177.

19 Oltre alla presentazione ufficiale del governo danese (Ibid., n. 169), Zoëga consegna ad Eckhel anche una lettera di Heyne, oggi conservata nell'archivio del medagliere del Kunsthistorisches Museum di Vienna e trascritta in appendice (fig. 1).

20 Eckhel, *Numi veteres*.

21 J. Eckhel, *Catalogus musei Caesarei Vindobonensis numorum veterum distributus in partes II., quarum prior monetam urbium, populorum, regum, altera Romanorum complectitur*, (Vindobonae: sumptibus Ioannis Pauli Kraus, 1779).

22 Recentemente A. Burnett "The Study of Coins in Britain and the British Museum during the late 18th and 19th Centuries", in *Geldgeschichte vs. Numismatik. Theodor Mommsen und die antike Münze*, herausgegeben von H.-M. von Kaenel, M.R.-Alföldi, U. Peter, H. Komnick, (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2004), 73–90, in particolare 75–77.

23 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettere nn. 183, 185.

e fonti più disparate), riorganizzandole secondo uno schema ben preciso e arricchendole con aggiunte e commenti. Come testimoniato in più punti del suo carteggio,[24] Eckhel, nei primi anni '80 del Settecento, lavorava alla bozza della *Doctrina numorum veterum*, opera generale sulla numismatica antica in 8 volumi, poi pubblicati tra il 1792 e il 1798. A questo proposito egli aveva intessuto una fitta rete di contatti con vari studiosi e collezionisti, scelti in maniera strategica, che da varie parti d'Europa e dell'Impero Ottomano lo tenevano aggiornato sulle nuove scoperte, ritrovamenti e pubblicazioni numismatiche. A differenza delle opere allora conosciute, il lavoro che Eckhel andava realizzando in concomitanza con la visita di Zoëga non intendeva elencare tutti i tipi coniati da un determinato imperatore o da una determinata zecca, ma voleva fornire un contenitore, una struttura entro la quale disporre le monete antiche, fornendo un quadro generale della disciplina. Un altro elemento innovativo della *Doctrina* era quello di mettere in discussione in maniera critica le fonti usate: questo atteggiamento empirico prevedeva di includere solo gli esemplari che l'autore aveva potuto verificare di persona o che provenivano da fonti giudicate attendibili. Era il nucleo originario di quest'immensa opera che Eckhel, con grande generosità, aveva permesso a Zoëga di studiare e copiare.

A questo punto è facile immaginare come un uomo carismatico come Eckhel abbia potuto esercitare un fascino notevole sul giovane Zoëga. Oltre ad essere caratterizzato da una rigorosa impostazione metodologica, Eckhel era anche dotato di una sottile vena ironico-umoristica, fattori che lo rendevano un insegnante molto amato.[25] La sua dedizione all'insegnamento è testimoniata dall'accoglienza amichevole e cordiale rivolta al suo giovane allievo danese,[26] e soprattutto si manifesta con la scelta di pubblicare nel 1787 un volumetto introduttivo alla numismatica antica indirizzato agli studenti.[27] Questo

24 Conservato presso il medagliere del Kunsthistorisches Museum di Vienna ed ora in corso di studio da parte degli autori.

25 J. Bergmann, "Pflege der Numismatik in Österreich im XVIII. Jahrhundert mit besonderem Hinblicke auf das k. k. Münz- und Medaillen-Cabinet in Wien. II. Abteilung", *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 24 (1857), 296–364, in particolare 334–337; E. Specht, "Die Geschichte der numismatischen Lehre an der Universität Wien", *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 113–114 (2005), 17–31, specialmente 17; W. Szaivert "Die akademische Lehre der Numismatik in Österreich im 18. Jahrhundert", *Numismatische Zeitschrift*, in corso di stampa.

26 Zoëga era sempre il benvenuto nell'abitazione privata di Eckhel: Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettera n. 185.

27 J. Eckhel, *Kurzgefaßte Anfangsgründe zur alten Numismatik*, (Wien: bey Joseph Edlen von Kurzbek, [1787]). Un'opera introduttiva largamente usata all'epoca, L. Jobert, *La science*

manualetto ebbe successivamente grande successo tanto da essere riedito in tedesco nel 1807[28] e tradotto in latino,[29] italiano[30] e francese.[31]

In maniera entusiastica, Zoëga scriveva a Heyne, a metà circa del suo soggiorno viennese, che la lettura dei documenti fornitigli da Eckhel e la possibilità di discuterne di persona con l'autore gli avevano finalmente dato un quadro di riferimento generale, totale e sistematico della numismatica antica.[32] All'inizio del dicembre 1782, Zoëga partiva da Vienna diretto a Roma con una copia manoscritta del lavoro di Eckhel con sé e una percezione unitaria della disciplina: aveva acquisito una conoscenza approfondita del 'sistema' eckheliano, e da questo momento disponeva di un metodo che poteva applicare allo studio di qualsiasi collezione numismatica.[33]

Contatti epistolari con Joseph Eckhel (1785–1794)

Il primo contatto scritto tra Zoëga ed Eckhel, avvenuto solo nel 1785, tradisce un certo imbarazzo per il silenzio durato tre anni.[34] Sappiamo dalla testimonianza di Friedrich Münter, di passaggio a Vienna nell'autunno 1784, che Eckhel lamentava la mancanza di notizie da parte dello studioso danese.[35] Il carteggio oggi conservato[36] mostra come Zoëga divenne ben presto uno dei principali corrispondenti da Roma, entrando così a far parte della rete di studiosi intessuta da Eckhel. Gli argomenti trattati nelle lettere riguardano non solo

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des medailles. Nouvelle edition avec des remarques historiques & critiques, I–II, (Paris: chez De Bure, 1739), era invece indirizzata soprattutto ai collezionisti.

28 J. Eckhel, *Kurzgefaßte Anfangsgründe zur alten Numismatik. Neue vermehrte Auflage*, (Wien: auf Kosten des Herausgebers [F. de Paula Neumann], 1807); per l'identificazione dell'editore si veda Szaivert, "Die akademische Lehre".

29 M.P. Katancsich, *Josephi Eckhel elementa numismaticae veteris ex germanico in latinum transtulit Math. Petr. Katancsich*, (Budae: typis ac sumptibus typographiae Regiae Universitatis Pestinensis, 1799).

30 F. Caronni, *Lezioni elementari di numismatica antica dell'abate Eckhel tradotte dal tedesco*, (Roma: nella Stamperia Pagliarini, 1808).

31 G. Jacob-Kolb, *Traité élémentaire de numismatique ancienne, grecque et romaine, composé d'après celui d'Eckhel*, I–II, (Paris: chez Aimé-André et Desplaces et comp., 1825).

32 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettera n. 185.

33 Ibid., lettera n. 188.

34 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, lettera n. 270.

35 Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Aus den Tagebüchern Friedrich Münters. Wander-und Lehrjahre eines dänischen Gelehrten*, I, (Kopenhagen: P. Haase & Sohn, 1937), 109.

36 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, lettere nn. 270–271, 275, 278–279, 287, 292, 309, 314, 483, 506, 537, 575, 582, 627, 630, 634.

la numismatica, ma anche iscrizioni e altre antichità. Si trovano notizie sulle nuove scoperte avvenute a Roma e nel resto della penisola, come per esempio la colonna di Antonino Pio trovata presso Montecitorio e utilizzata in quegli anni per restaurare l'obelisco attualmente visibile nella piazza,[37] i resti della città di *Gabii*, con iscrizioni e oggetti interessanti, tra cui spicca il cd. "altare dei dodici numi", oggi al Museo del Louvre,[38] o un'iscrizione su laminetta di bronzo dall'Italia meridionale.[39] Tramite Zoëga, Eckhel ha la possibilità di consultare esperti di glittica in quel momento presenti a Roma per un parere sull'autenticità di una gemma incisa.[40] Si trovano poi notizie sulle principali novità editoriali romane, che in alcuni casi Zoëga manda a Vienna per la biblioteca del medagliere imperiale.[41] Naturalmente nella corrispondenza discorsi inerenti alla numismatica e alla storia antica occupano lo spazio maggiore: Zoëga invia disegni e informazioni sulle monete più rare della collezione Borgia, sollecitando a volte l'aiuto del suo maestro per la corretta identificazione dei pezzi;[42] viene discussa l'identificazione di obelischi sulle monete antiche[43] e il numero di viaggi in Egitto dell'imperatore Adriano.[44]

Durante tutto lo scambio epistolare Eckhel incoraggia e sprona il suo allievo a completare la sua opera sulle monete alessandrine e proseguire gli studi di numismatica antica, anche quando, nell'inverno 1791, Zoëga gli comunica la decisione di abbandonare questa materia per dedicarsi allo studio della religione egizia.[45] Questo interesse di Zoëga, già manifestatosi durante la stesura dei *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii*, fornisce uno spunto interessante per indagare il diverso atteggiamento dei due studiosi nei confronti della numismatica in

37 Ibid., lettere nn. 627, 630, 634. Per un riferimento generale si veda L. Vogel, *The Column of Antoninus Pius*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

38 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, lettera n. 582. Si tratta delle iscrizioni CIL XIV, 2793, 2795–2796, 2801, 2803–2807, 2809, 2812 presenti nel documento originale, ma non trascritte da Andreasen e Ascani. Per le sculture si veda K. de Kersauson, *Catalogue des portraits romains. Tome I. Portraits de la République et d'époque Julio-Claudienne*, (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1986), 140–144, 190–191, nn. 64, 89; C.R. Long, *The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome*, (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 14–16, 294–295.

39 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, lettere nn. 287, 292, 309. CIG 1.1, pagina 9, n. 4; D. Granei, "La laminetta cosiddetta di Petelia: per una riconsiderazione dei dati di rinvenimento", *Studi di Antichità* 8 (1995), 69–76.

40 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, lettere nn. 309, 314.

41 Ibid., lettere nn. 270–271, 275, 278–279, 506.

42 Ibid., lettere nn. 270–271, 275, 278–279, 506.

43 Ibid., lettera n. 575.

44 Ibid., lettere nn. 627, 630.

45 Ibid., lettere nn. 506, 537.

generale. Secondo Zoëga le raffigurazioni presenti sui rovesci delle monete alessandrine possono fornire indizi utili per capire la religione locale, fondamentale per ricostruire la storia morale del popolo egizio. Eckhel, invece, con atteggiamento più prudente e sobrio, preferisce attenersi alla tangibilità storica dei pezzi e non condivide il tentativo di Zoëga di interpretare la religione egizia, che secondo lo studioso austriaco rimane inaccessibile e non indagabile scientificamente.[46] Oltre ai suoi mutati interessi scientifici, la decisione di Zoëga di abbandonare gli studi numismatici scaturisce da circostanze non stimolanti a Roma, unite forse anche alle sue difficoltà economiche, e dall'attesa per la pubblicazione della grande opera di Eckhel, percepita come punto di partenza necessario per l'inizio di qualsiasi altro studio numismatico. Infatti, l'ultima lettera conservata della corrispondenza tra Eckhel e Zoëga risale al 1794, anno in cui viene pubblicato il quarto volume della *Doctrina numorum veterum*, contenente la sezione sulle monete imperiali alessandrine. Nonostante ciò Zoëga rimarrà a lungo un punto di riferimento a Roma per gli studiosi interessati alla numismatica antica[47] e i suoi contatti con Christian Ramus (1765–1832), direttore del Reale Gabinetto Numismatico di Danimarca all'inizio dell'Ottocento, assicureranno al medagliere reale l'acquisto di collezioni private dal mercato romano.[48]

In conclusione, si può affermare che l'insegnamento più importante che Eckhel trasmise a Zoëga fu una 'visione', ovvero una percezione unitaria a 360 gradi della numismatica antica. Grazie a questa percezione, unita alla sensibilità innata dello studioso danese, i *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii*, che potevano essere un mero catalogo delle monete più rare della raccolta Borgia, divennero invece un'opera generale e approfondita su un aspetto specifico della numismatica antica.[49]

46 Ibid., lettere nn. 271, 278; si veda anche Eckhel, *Doctrina*, IV, 26–29.

47 Già nel 1786 Friedrich Münter aveva copiato e studiato a Roma i quaderni di appunti di Zoëga; Andreasen, *Aus den Tagebüchern*, II, 214, 252.

48 Mørkholm, "The Danish Contribution", 134–136 e K. Ascani, "Il carteggio di Georg Zoëga (1755–1809) mediatore fra Roma e la Danimarca", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 37 (2012), 151–157.

49 Georg Zoëga aveva dichiarato l'intenzione di inserire nelle note dei *Numi Aegyptii* tutto lo scibile sulle tradizioni del popolo egizio; Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettera n. 203.

Appendice

Lettera di Christian Gottlob Heyne a Joseph Eckhel in cui viene presentato Georg Zoëga. Trascrizione a cura di B. Woytek. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett, Archiv V, 90. Fig. 9.1 (f. 1r)

[1r] Göttingen, 10 Jun. 1782

Wohlgebohrner Herr,

Hochzuehrender Herr Professor

Die ausnehmende Hochachtung welche ich gegen Ew. Wohlgebohren trage, und die Werthschätzung und Bewunderung Ihrer gründlichen und so viel umfassenden Gelehrsamkeit, habe ich verschiedene Male Gelegenheit gehabt, öffentlich und in Schriften vor der gelehrten Welt zu bezeugen. Ein gleiches in Briefen und Schreiben an Ew. Wohlgeb. zu thun, hat es mir an einer schicklichen Veranlassung gefehlt. Jetzt nutze ich eine, die sich darbietet: Der junge Däne, Hr. Zoega, der Ihnen die Ehre hat dieß zu überreichen, hat sich ganz dem Münzstudio gewidmet, und reiset nach Wien, blos um sich den Zutritt zu einem Manne zu verschaffen, der in diesem Studio Meister ist, und dessen Schüler er zu seyn wünschet. [1v] Ew. Wohlgebohren würden auch aus eignem Triebe einem jungen Numismatiker alle Gelegenheit sich nach Ihrem Muster zu bilden geben: ich schmeichle mir aber doch, daß auch meine ergebenste Bitte in die Wagschale ein kleines Gewicht werfen wird.

Hätten doch Ew. Wohlgeb. die vorjährige gelehrte Reise auch in unsre Gegenden geführt! Wie groß ist mein Verlangen, persönliche Bekanntschaft mit einem mir so schätzbaren und verehrten Gelehrten zu errichten!

Nun noch eine gehorsamste Bitte: Schon seit vielen Jahren bewerbe ich mich um die Supplemens aux Monnoyes d'Or 1769 und um Catalogue des Monnoyes d'Argent 1769, 2de Edit. Unser Resident, Hr. von Mühl, scheint nicht glücklich in seinem Gesuch zu seyn. [2r] So viel ich weiß, werden die Bücher blos von Ihro Majt. ausgegeben und verschicket. Ew. Wohlgeb. können mir am beßten die Mittel und Wege anzeigen, wie ich hiesiger Bibliothek diese Stücke bald verschaffen kann.

Wird von Ew. Wohlgeb. bald ein neues gelehrtes Werk uns erfreuen?

Hr. Pellerin wird sich ja wohl endlich zufrieden geben! Das muß ein sonderbarer Mann seyn!

Mit wahrer aufrichtiger Hochachtung habe ich die Ehre zu beharren

Eurer Wohlgebohren

gehorsamster Diener

Heyne

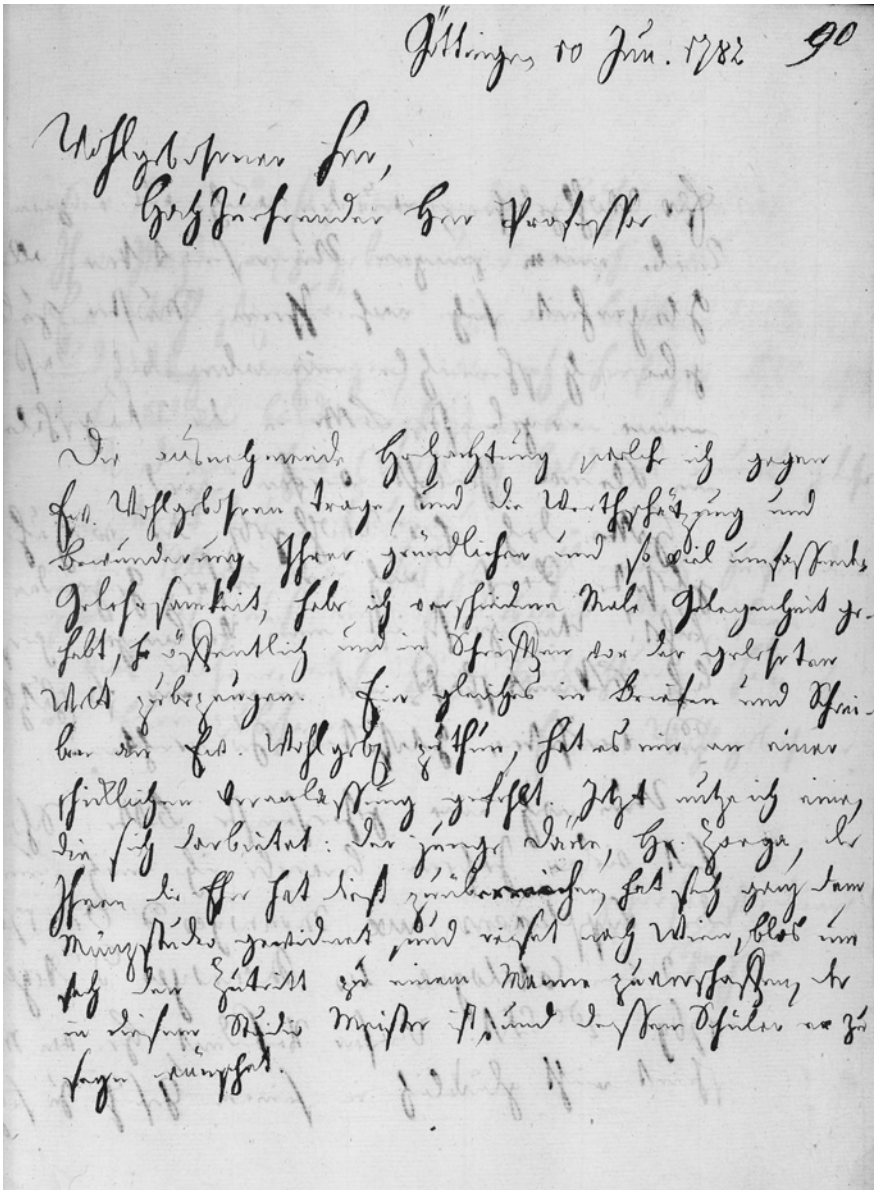

FIGURE 9.1 *Prima pagina di una lettera di C.G. Heyne (1729–1812) a J. Eckhel, in cui viene presentato G. Zoëga (sesta riga dal basso). Gottinga, 10 giugno 1782. (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett, Archiv v, 90, f. 1r.).*

CHAPTER 10

Zoëga, pionnier de la numismatique alexandrine

Laurent Bricault

Dans le compte rendu qu'il donne, en 1903, du *Catalogo della collezione Giovanni Dattari*, paru deux ans plus tôt, Seymour de Ricci écrit, avec cet art de la critique qui lui est si familier :

> Le premier recueil général de médailles de [la] série [des monnaies impériales d'Alexandrie], qui ait été rédigé avec une compétence et un soin suffisants pour mériter l'épithète de scientifique, est le beau travail du Danois Georges Zoega, *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii prostantes in museo Borgiano Velitris, adiectis praeterea quotquot huius classis numismata ex variis museis atque libris colligere obtigit* (Romae, 1787, 4°). Comme l'indique son titre, c'est un véritable *Corpus* qu'avait entrepris Zoega ; il s'est acquitté de sa tâche avec un sens critique dont plus d'un de ses contemporains aurait eu avantage à s'inspirer.[1]

Il est vrai qu'en 1782, lorsque le gouvernement danois envoie le jeune Zoëga à l'étranger pour trois années afin d'y étudier la numismatique, nul n'aurait pu songer qu'un tel ouvrage puisse alors voir le jour, encore moins si vite. L'objectif initial était à terme de le voir bientôt prendre en charge la collection royale du Danemark, ce qui n'arriva jamais, par l'une de ces combinaisons de raisons – objectives ou non – et de rencontres – amoureuses ou autres – dont la vie est coutumière.

De l'enthousiasme à la frustration

Après avoir passé six mois à Vienne auprès de Joseph Eckhel,[2] Zoëga quitta la capitale autrichienne pour l'Italie le 4 décembre 1782.[3] Après être passé

1 S. de Ricci, « G. Dattari, *Numi Augg. Alexandrini ; monete imperiali greche* … », *Revue Archéologique* 1, 4e série, (1903.1), 114.

2 Voir, dans ce même volume, la contribution de Daniela Williams et Bernhard Woytek.

3 Le parcours de Zoëga est rappelé par O. Mørkholm, « The Danish Contribution to the Study of Ancient Numismatics 1780–1880 », in *Den kongelige Mønt- og Medaillesamling 1781–1981*, redigeret af O. Mørkholm, (København : Nationalmuseet, 1981), 122–164 (123–129 sur Zoëga).

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par Venise et Florence, il arriva à Rome où il fut présenté, à l'instar de nombreux autres jeunes étudiants danois,[4] à Stefano Borgia, alors secrétaire de la Congrégation *de Propaganda Fide*, ce département de l'administration pontificale chargé de la diffusion du catholicisme et de l'administration des affaires de l'Église dans les pays non catholiques. Le prélat avait été prévenu de la venue à Rome du jeune Zoëga par un courrier de Giuseppe Garampi, l'ancien préfet des archives secrètes du Vatican, à cette date évêque de Montefiascone e Corneto,[5] posté de Vienne le 15 novembre 1782,[6] courrier dont le sujet principal portait sur quelques monnaies coufiques, un des domaines majeurs de la collection numismatique de Borgia. À peine quelques mois plus tard, en juin 1783, Stefano Borgia demandait au jeune savant, alors âgé de 28 ans, s'il accepterait de mettre de l'ordre dans sa collection personnelle de monnaies grecques,[7] jusqu'ici conservée sans grande rigueur dans de multiples sacs (« Die in Säcken lagen »), comme Zoëga le signale à son père dans la lettre qu'il lui adresse depuis Rome le 23 avril 1786.[8]

Ayant accepté, Zoëga s'acquitta si bien de sa tâche que Stefano Borgia lui demanda alors de publier « die Medaillen die unter den Kaisern in Alexandrien in Ägypten mit griechischer Aufschrift geprägt worden », autrement dit les monnaies impériales alexandrines de sa collection. Pourquoi cette partie-là plutôt qu'une autre ? Toute tentative d'affirmation se heurte à l'absence de données concrètes. Tout au plus pourrait-on relier le souhait de Borgia de mettre en avant, de manière cohérente, cette première publication de sa collection numismatique avec la tradition qui remonte au moins jusqu'au dominicain Giovanni Nanni de Viterbe (1432–1502). Plus connu sous le pseudonyme

4 K. Ascani, « Georg Zoega, il suo epistolario e il cardinale Stefano Borgia », in *Stefano Borgia e i Danesi a Roma*, Centro Internazionale di Studi Borgiani – Quaderni 1, a cura di R. Langella, (Velletri : Edizioni tra 8 & 9, 2000), 19–22 ; Ø. Andreasen, « Il Cardinale Borgia e i Danesi a Roma », ibid., 23–61.

5 G. de Novaes, *Elementi della storia de' sommi pontefici da San Pietro sino al felicemente regnante Pio Papa VII*, XVI, 1, (Roma : presso Francesco Bourlié, 1822[3]), 131 ; cf. M. Caffiero, *s.v.* « Garampi, Giuseppe », in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 52, (Roma : Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1999), 224–229.

6 Borg. Lat. 283 f. 72.

7 L. Travaini, « Le collezioni numismatiche del cardinale Stefano Borgia », in *Le quattro voci del mondo : arte, culture e saperi nella collezione di Stefano Borgia 1731–1804*, a cura di M. Nocca, (Napoli : Electa, 2001), 242–254.

8 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II, (København : Gesellschaft fur danische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), lettre n° 290 ; cf. déjà F. Gottlieb Welcker, *Zoëga's Leben. Sammlung seiner Briefe und Beurtheilung seiner Werke*, II, (Stuttgart – Tübingen : in der J.G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1819), 18–22.

d'Annius, ce secrétaire privé du pape Alexandre VI Borgia avait voulu réduire la part attribuée à l'influence grecque sur le développement de la culture en Italie. Prenant appui sur Diodore de Sicile, il faisait venir Osiris-roi en Italie, d'où il aurait chassé les géants, avant d'y enseigner des éléments d'agriculture et l'art de la vigne. Son règne aurait laissé de solides traces dans la toponymie : ainsi les Apennins dériveraient du nom du dieu Apis. Se rattachant lui-même, au passage, à la *gens Annia*, le dominicain de Viterbe avait en outre établi que la famille Borgia descendait d'un Hercule égyptien, fils d'Osiris : le taureau des armes des Borgia n'était autre que l'Apis osirien. On reconnaît là le thème de la célèbre peinture du Pinturicchio dans les appartements du Vatican, où Isis et Osiris sont figurés près du taureau Apis.

Après mûre réflexion, ainsi qu'il l'écrivit plus tard à son père dans la lettre déjà citée, Zoëga accepta, proposant à Stefano Borgia d'intituler l'ouvrage *Numi Alex. Mus. Borg. p*. Bien que ne s'estimant pas numismate, il dût considérer que la rédaction d'un tel livre ne pourrait que lui procurer un crédit certain à Copenhague auprès de ceux qui voyaient en lui le futur conservateur de la collection royale du Danemark.

En septembre 1783, le catalogue était plus qu'en bonne voie et la perspective d'une publication prochaine pouvait s'envisager. Jusqu'à ce que deux problèmes majeurs ne viennent déranger ses plans.

Le premier était relatif à la collection Borgia elle-même. Secrétaire du *de Propaganda Fide*, Stefano Borgia accusait réception des très nombreux envois d'antiques acquis un peu partout dans le monde par les missionnaires catholiques. Et parmi tous ces objets figuraient des centaines de monnaies découvertes en Égypte. L'occasion était belle d'en acquérir un certain nombre pour son propre compte. En quelques mois, en cette fin d'année 1783, la collection des alexandrines du Museo Borgiano s'était accrue d'un tiers et décembre venait d'apporter son lot de nouveautés suite à un nouvel achat. Et tout le catalogue mis en œuvre par Zoëga de se retrouver à chaque fois chamboulé, bouleversé ; en 1785, Stefano Borgia faisait l'acquisition d'un lot de « medaglie egizie » de la collection du couvent de San Bartolomeo all'Isola Tiberina;[9] et ainsi de suite.

Le second problème était lié au propre projet du jeune Danois, et probablement aussi à l'accroissement rapide de la collection Borgia. Plutôt que de se limiter à établir seulement le catalogue de cette collection en constante évolution, ne serait-il pas plus pertinent d'intégrer au volume prévu toutes les monnaies alexandrines déjà publiées par d'autres ainsi que celles, inédites, qu'il

9 Borg. Lat. 890 f. 181.

avait pu voir lui-même ? L'idée d'un *corpus nummorum alexandrinorum* avait pris corps.

Ce *corpus* n'était d'ailleurs pas une fin en soi puisque, dans son esprit, le volume envisagé pourrait même être considéré comme un travail préliminaire à l'Histoire de l'humanité dont il rêvait, et qui trouvait ses racines en Égypte.

Le souci de Zoëga était donc bien de prendre le prétexte de l'élaboration d'un catalogue de médailles pour en faire un véritable outil scientifique, le plus rigoureux et précis possible, le plus documenté et détaillé qui soit.

Il prit alors la décision, avec l'approbation de Stefano Borgia, en mars 1784, de se rendre à Paris afin de poursuivre ses recherches et de trouver dans ce qui était alors la plus large collection de monnaies grecques au monde les *comparanda* qui lui permettraient d'établir son catalogue exhaustif dans les meilleures conditions et avec la plus grande fiabilité possible. En chemin, s'arrêtant notamment à Florence pour voir le médaillier des Médicis, puis à Turin où, dans le désordre total de la collection, il trouva malgré tout de nombreuses monnaies inédites,[10] il rédigea le catalogue couvrant la période s'étendant de Marc Antoine à Trajan, qu'il fit parvenir à Stefano Borgia. À ce rythme, le *magnum opus* serait bientôt achevé.

Il parvint à Paris en mai 1784 afin de travailler au Cabinet royal, alors dirigé par le philologue et écrivain Jean-Jacques Barthélémy, plus connu pour avoir été – entre autres – le déchiffreur du phénicien et de l'alphabet palmyrénien et l'auteur du *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*, paru en 1788, que pour ses publications numismatiques.[11] Âgé de 68 ans et pratiquement aveugle – comme le rapporte Zoëga dans une lettre adressée à Borgia depuis Paris, le 17 mai 1784 –,[12] le « Garde du Cabinet des médailles au sein de la Bibliothèque du roi » comme on le nommait alors, en avait remis la gestion à un neveu. Celui-ci, André Barthélémy de Courçay[13] « un uomo (…) che al Tedesco pensatore unisce la superficialità Francese » – tout un programme ! –, ne facilita guère à Zoëga l'accès aux collections. Après bien des difficultés et des vicissitudes, contraint de faire appel aux contacts des Borgia et des Doria dans la capitale française pour

10 Lettres adressées à Stefano Borgia, Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, I, (København : Munksgaard, 1967), lettres n° 204 depuis Livorno le 29 mars 1784 et n° 214 depuis Paris le 17 mai 1784.

11 D. Gerin, « Jean-Jacques Barthélémy, Garde du Cabinet du Roi ([1745] 1754–1795) et numismate », *Commission Internationale de Numismatique. Compte rendu* 46 (1999), 54–63 ; I. Aghion, « Collecting antiquities in eighteenth-century France », *Journal of the History of Collections* 14.2 (2002), 193–203.

12 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettre n° 208.

13 M. Amandry, *Les directeurs du département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques depuis 1719*, (Paris : Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2005), 4.

débloquer la situation, il put enfin travailler au Cabinet, mais ce qu'il y trouva lui donna rapidement l'impression d'être un nouveau Sisyphe.

Ce n'était pas seulement un matériel de comparaison qu'il découvrit, mais de très nombreux types inédits et de multiples variantes, ainsi qu'il l'écrit à Stefano Borgia dans une lettre datée du 14 juin 1784.[14] Et sans doute la situation parisienne n'était elle pas unique. Les collections de Londres, d'Oxford, de Gotha, d'autres encore devaient potentiellement réserver de nouvelles découvertes. Si riches soient-elles, les collections alexandrines déjà publiées, même accrues de la collection Borgia, étaient bien loin de recouvrir l'ensemble du monnayage impérial alexandrin. L'immensité de la tâche lui apparût telle qu'un certain découragement s'empara de lui et le conduisit à abréger son séjour parisien pour se diriger non vers Copenhague, comme initialement prévu, mais pour rentrer à Rome. Telle en tout cas est la raison qu'il invoque dans sa correspondance avec sa famille et ses amis.

Elle n'est sans doute pas la seule. Il y en avait d'autres. Deux au moins, comme le signale, non sans perfidie, l'abbé Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi, dans une lettre adressée à Giuseppe Garampi, fin 1784:[15] son mariage avec une jeune Romaine, fille d'un peintre, peu avant son départ pour Paris ; sa conversion au catholicisme, qui risquait d'être mal perçue dans le royaume luthérien du Danemark, lui laissant peu de chances de retourner à Copenhague selon le programme prévu initialement.

Il se contenterait donc de la collection Borgia, des monnaies déjà publiées ici et là, augmentées d'exemplaires vus par lui dans plusieurs cabinets, abandonnant ainsi, à sa grande déception, comme on peut le lire en p. v de sa préface ainsi que dans la lettre pour le moins désabusée qu'il adressa à son ami Andreas Birch le 26 novembre 1786, le projet d'un *corpus nummorum alexandrinorum*. Désabusé est peut-être même un euphémisme, quand on lit dans cette lettre « La mia opera Alessandrina, che di parte mia gia è terminata, e ch'un gran pezzo è che mi è venuta in odio ». La nécessité de reprendre quatre voire cinq fois son catalogue, de modifier son système de numérotation, d'adapter notes et appendices à ces diverses évolutions auront abouti, selon ses propres termes, à accoucher d'« un opera poco coerente ». C'est faire preuve d'une sévérité qui n'est pas vraiment justifiée.[16]

14 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, lettre n° 214.

15 Ibid., lettre n° 230.

16 L'intérêt de Zoëga pour les monnaies d'Alexandrie resta intact, comme en témoignent plusieurs lettres adressées à Stefano Borgia ou encore Friedrich Münter ; cf. Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, II, lettres n° 400–401, 403 (Borgia) et 406 (Münter).

La richesse d'une œuvre . . .

Il est temps de regarder l'ouvrage lui-même. Celui-ci se présente sous la forme d'un volume de 420 pages augmenté de 22 planches gravées présentant des monnaies du Museo Borgiano.

Après une brève introduction, dans laquelle il annonce le plan de son ouvrage ainsi que les difficultés rencontrées, dont je viens de me faire l'écho, Zoëga donne (p. VII–XI) la liste des 48 publications qu'il a utilisées, des 12 collections qu'il a pu étudier lui-même, ainsi que les titres de deux manuscrits inédits qu'il a pu consulter.

Le catalogue proprement dit (p. 1–345) est riche de près de 3560 entrées, ce qui en fait, et de loin, le plus important jamais publié jusqu'alors. Notons que le catalogue des monnaies impériales d'Alexandrie le plus solide dont nous disposons aujourd'hui, celui de la collection de Cologne, publié entre 1974 et 1983 par Angelo Geissen,[17] comporte quant à lui 3421 numéros.

À titre de comparaison :

- la collection des frères Tiepolo, publiée à Veni en 1736, contenait 773 monnaies alexandrines impériales;[18]
- la collection Arrigoni, publiée à Trévise en 1745, était riche de 702 monnaies;[19]
- la collection de l'écrivain vénitien Apostolo Zeno, constituée à la même époque (il vécut entre 1668 et 1750) mais publiée à Vienne seulement en 1957, présentait 512 monnaies;[20]
- et enfin, car je me limiterai à quatre, la collection de Vienne publiée par Eckhel en 1779,[21] en regroupait 401.

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17 A. Geissen, W. Weiser, *Katalog Alexandrinischer Kaisermünzen der Sammlung des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln*, Papyrologica Coloniensia 5, I–V, (Köln : Westdeutscher Verlag, 1974–1983).

18 L. Theupulus, F. Theupulus, A. Visentini, *Musei Theupoli antiqua numismata, olim collecta a Joanne Dominico Theupolo*, (Venetiis : s.n., 1736).

19 *Numismata quaedam cuiuscumque formae et metalli Musei Honorii Arigoni Veneti : ad usum iuventutis rei nummariae studiosae*, (Tarvisii : Sumptibus Auctoris Apud Eusebium Bergamum, 1741–1745).

20 *Sonder-Münzenauktion Sammlung Apostolo Zeno, 1668–1750*, (Wien : Dorotheum, Kunstabteilung, 1955).

21 J.H. Eckhel, *Catalogus Musei Caesarei Vindobonensis numorum veterum distributus in partes duas, quarum prior monetam urbium, populorum, regum, altera Romanorum complectitur*, (Vindobonae : Sumptibus Joannis Pauli Kraus 1779), 264–283, dont 5 monnaies des nomes classées à part, ce que Zoëga ne fit pas.

Le classement est opéré règne après règne, chronologiquement, les monnaies à l'effigie des impératrices venant après celles de leur époux. La première monnaie listée (au Cabinet de Paris) est de Marc Antoine, la dernière (dans la collection Pococke) de Licinius senior. Les monnaies qui se trouvent dans le Museo Borgiano sont indiquées par un numéro en chiffres romain, tandis que les autres sont introduites par un astérisque.

Viennent ensuite un index des cités et des préfectures égyptiennes dont le nom apparaît sur les monnaies (celles-ci n'étant pas classées à part dans le catalogue), une longue table de correspondance entre les années régnales des empereurs, le calendrier romain et le calendrier chrétien, un appendice contenant de nouveaux exemplaires, des *errata* et 22 pages de planches.

Cette structure devait en inspirer bien d'autres par la suite.

Malgré l'opinion relativement négative de Zoëga lui-même sur l'aboutissement de son travail, l'ouvrage fut salué par beaucoup. Dès août 1788, on pouvait ainsi lire aux pages 177–180 de *L'esprit des journaux français et étrangers*, un enthousiaste compte rendu de l'œuvre. Eckhel lui-même ne se priva pas de saluer la précision des descriptions de Zoëga autant que son souci de collecter et de publier de nombreuses variantes inédites ou peu connues.

. . . et ses limites

Il serait aujourd'hui particulièrement vain et déplacé de pointer toutes les erreurs, approximations et insuffisances d'un tel ouvrage, remarquable à plus d'un titre. Le classement opéré est la plupart du temps d'une grande rigueur, aux incertitudes près de monnaies mal identifiées qu'il n'aura pu étudier lui-même, ou de lectures mal digérées. Certes, la tentative de prise du pouvoir par Domitius Domitianus est située juste avant l'avènement d'Aurélien (soit en 270 plutôt qu'en 296), alors que Joseph Pellerin avait dès 1765[22] montré que la révolte avait eu lieu sous le règne de Dioclétien. Certes, mais nul n'est à l'abri de ce genre de négligence. Eckhel lui aussi aura – volontairement ou non – mal lu Pellerin, qui avait également noté que les monnaies dites des nomes ne pouvaient être considérées comme des émissions autonomes puisqu'elles portaient l'effigie de l'empereur, et qu'elles n'avaient pas dû être frappées dans les différents nomes, mais bien dans un seul et même atelier, tant leurs

22 J. Pellerin, *Mélange de diverses médailles, pour servir de supplément aux recueils des médailles de rois et de villes*, I, (Paris : chez H.L. Guerin & L.F. Delatour, 1765), 235–236.

caractéristiques – de gravure, de style – étaient communes.[23] L'autorité d'Eckhel canonisera le traitement à part des monnaies dites des nomes, comme s'il s'agissait d'un monnayage spécifique, ce qu'il n'est pas.[24] Une convention qui dure encore de nos jours. Qu'il suffise de feuilleter les ouvrages et catalogues parus ces 25 dernières années sur l'atelier provincial d'Alexandrie. Zoëga, lui, n'avait pas opéré ainsi, faisant apparaître ces monnaies dans le catalogue général, sans leur réserver de place spécifique.

Les introductions aux règnes des différents empereurs, basées sur les écrits les plus fiables de son époque et une remarquable érudition pour un aussi jeune savant constituent un autre apport de son ouvrage, qui replace ainsi en contexte, le plus souvent avec intelligence et talent, les frappes de l'atelier d'Alexandrie. Remarquable à ce titre est le long développement sur le Palmyrénien Vaballath.

L'intérêt de Zoëga, qui voulait faire œuvre d'historien autant que de numismatographe, se concentrait clairement sur les types, tel un lointain précurseur du *Roman Provincial Coinage*. D'aucuns ont pu le regretter,[25] considérant que les types monétaires ne pouvaient guère être considérés comme une source historique à part entière, ce dont on me permettra de douter.

Les notes très copieuses rédigées par Zoëga, inspirées en grande partie par la très grande variété des types de revers utilisés par l'atelier d'Alexandrie, se muèrent rapidement en appendices traitant des cultes et la mythologie égyptienne. L'intention est louable, mais ces considérations ne sont peut-être pas les meilleures parties de l'œuvre, le jeune Danois s'embarquant le plus souvent sur les chemins chaotiques de la spéculation mythologique et des explications allégoriques. Eckhel lui-même, malgré la chaleur de sa sympathie pour son jeune élève, avec l'attitude rationaliste qui était la sienne, ne le suivit pas sur ces routes qui bientôt se muèrent en impasse.

Ce faisant, Zoëga se montrait le digne héritier d'Athanase Kircher (1601–1680) qui, en parfait élève des leçons de la Renaissance, fonda les analyses de

23 J. Pellerin, *Recueil de médailles de peuples et de villes*, III, (Paris : chez H.L. Guerin & L.F. Delatour, 1763), 2, et Id., *Additions aux neuf Volumes de Recueils de Médailles de Rois, de Villes, etc. imprimés en 1762, 1763, 1765, 1767, 1768 et 1770, avec des remarques sur quelques médailles déjà publiées*, (Paris : chez la veuve Desaint, 1778), 88–89.

24 M. Weber, A. Geissen, *Die alexandrinischen Gaumünzen der römischen Kaiserzeit. Die ägyptischen Gaue und ihre Ortsgötter im Spiegel der numismatischen Quellen*, Studien zur spätägyptischen Religion 11, (Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz, 2013).

25 Ainsi E. Christiansen, « The Alexandrian Coins before Zoega », in *Florilegium Numismaticum. Studia in honorem U. Westermark*, edidit H. Nilsson, (Stockholm : Svenska Numismatiska Föreningen, 1992), 111–118, part. 115 ; Id., « Om de alexandrinske mønter før Zoëga », *Nordisk Numismatisk Unions Medlemsblad* 4 (1990), 70–74 (*non vidi*).

son *Œdipus aegyptiacus* sur les interprétations hermétiques de Marsile Ficin et de l'Académie florentine, elles-mêmes dérivées de Jamblique. Excellent connaisseur de la langue copte, Kircher s'en était allé se perdre dans une forêt dense et confuse, peuplée de symboles les plus divers et de systèmes philosophiques les plus tardifs, ce qui le fit échouer dans sa tentative de déchiffrement des hiéroglyphes égyptiens. Un siècle plus tard, langue copte, interprétations symboliques et obélisques romains sont toujours intimement liés, dans l'*Vrbs* comme au Museo Borgiano.[26] À la demande du pape Pie VI, en 1787, l'architecte Antinori dresse un obélisque en face du Quirinal ; c'est ensuite le tour de l'obélisque de la Trinité-des-Monts ; en 1792, on restaure l'obélisque de Montecitorio. En 1797, notre savant danois publie son *De origine et usu obeliscorum*. Mais ceci est une autre histoire.[27]

26 Sur le Museo Borgiano, A.H.L. Heeren, « Bemerkungen über das vormalige Mus. Borg. in Velletri », *Amaltheia*, I, (1820), 311–320 ; « Catalogo del Mus. Borg., par le conte Borgia, 1814 », in *Documenti inediti per servire alla storia dei Musei d'Italia*, I, a cura di Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, (Firenze – Roma : Tipografia Bencini, 1878), s. X–XX, 275–427 ; cf. Ibid., II, (1879), 267–268. En 1814, la Collection Borgia entra au Musée Borbonico de Naples ; cf. A. Ruesch (a cura di), *Guida illustrata del Museo Nazionale di Napoli*, (Napoli : Richter & Co., 1908), 7.

27 On verra, dans ce volume, la contribution de Emanuele M. Ciampini.

Zoëga and the Origins of Egyptology

CHAPTER 11

On the Origins of an Egyptologist*

Thomas Christiansen

Introduction

Georg Zoëga's second stay in Copenhagen stands at the centre of this contribution. It has only been touched upon briefly in his biographies and exclusively for its importance for his numismatic and classical studies. It is however during these ten months that he is introduced to influential politicians and scholars with interest in Oriental studies and gives his first extensive reports of ancient Egyptian objects. There can be little doubt that these encounters were important and formative for Zoëga and by extension for our understanding of this 'forgotten scholar'.

Copenhagen 1781–1782

Zoëga arrived in Copenhagen on the 23rd of July 1781 determined to become an antiquarian. On his way back to Denmark he wrote a letter to his father, wherein he stressed the importance of a conversation he recently had in Göttingen with his former teacher Christian Gottlob von Heyne (1729–1812):

> Seit meinem vorigen Briefe, vornehmlich nachdem ich Heyne gesprochen habe, habe ich meine Gesinnung verändert (...) Ich gehe izt nach Copenhagen um Alles auf einmal zu versuchen, mich gerade u. so bald es geschehen kann an Guldberg zu wenden, rein heraus mit ihm zu sprechen, u. Unterstützung zu suchen zu Ausführung eines Plans, der nothwendig auch ihn interessiren muß, wenn er noch einige Zuneigung übrig hat für diejenigen Wissenschaften die einmal seine Beschäftigung waren.[1]

* I would like to express my gratitude to cand. phil. in History Paul F. Hartvigson for his many insightful comments and corrections.

1 Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, I, (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), 237, letter n. 138.

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Immediately upon his arrival in the city he paid a visit to the Secretary of State, Ove Høegh-Guldberg (1731–1808), who in his youth had been interested in antiquity and archaeology and was now an ardent public supporter of them.[2] At the meeting Zoëga was given the task to sort and publish the four coin collections then in Copenhagen. The initial plan was soon expanded and it became the explicit intention of Guldberg to attach Zoëga permanently to large Royal collection of coins, medals and gems, which lay unsorted at Rosenborg Castle. First Zoëga should however study two years abroad—at his own repeated request—in order to master the field of numismatics. On the 20th of April 1782 King Christian VII (1749–1808) signed a document paraphrased by Guldberg supplying him with a two year travel-stipend from the fond '*ad usus publicos*' and on the 11th of May he embarked upon the journey that would forever tie him to Rome and its antiquities.[3]

"Egyptian idols"

The letters from the period mainly concern his advances in the field of numismatics and his impending travel; it is however clear from them that he formed a close relationship with Guldberg and that he discussed the study of antiquity with him and other important representatives of the state:

> Ich habe gestern Abend eine zweystündige Unterredung gehabt mit dem Statssekretär Guldberg, einem Manne der in jeder Rücksicht meine Erwartungen weit übertrift. Er hat eine beträchtliche Samlung von Münzen, wounter manches seltene Stück ist, und eine Anzahl Idolen, vornehmlich Egiptischer, die zum Theil ganz ausserordentlich sind. Der Staatsminister Graf von Moltke interessiert sich auch besonders für das antiquarische Studium. Ich habe ihn vershiedene Aufsäze vorlegen müssen.[4]

2 He had written several volumes on theology and history: his work on a comprehensive world history is especially noteworthy. Only three volumes appeared covering the world-history from creation up to 404 B.C., O. Høegh-Guldberg, *Verdenshistorie*, I–III, (Kiøbenhavn: August Friderich Stein, 1768–1772).

3 The document is published in Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 265, letter n. 163. It should be noted that the study of coins and gems are treated as a single entity in the detailed instructions for his travels and studies that he received on the 10th of May, ibid. 267–269; the motives found on the latter objects would *a priori* entail a study of ancient Egyptian motives.

4 Ibid. 254.

The import of these conversations is not recorded, but it hardly seems accidental that the "Egyptian idols" are singled out. Guldberg at the time was working on a '*catalogue raissoné*' of Egyptian and Roman antiquities in Danish private and royal collections together with the artist Johannes Wiedewelt (1731–1802). The first and only fascicle of the planned series, which did not appear until 1786, is devoted to the Høegh-Guldberg collection.[5] In the catalogue 65 objects are illustrated in copper engraved plates and coupled with a short descriptive text; a format that Guldberg envisioned that Zoëga should follow in his prospective work on the noteworthy coins and gems in Copenhagen.

Guldberg's Egyptian collection—today housed at The National Museum of Denmark—encompassed 35 numbers, when it entered the royal *Kunstkammer* in 1810. It is evident from the plates in the catalogue that he had acquired at least five of them from Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815) in 1778, when the latter moved from the capital to Meldorf in northern Germany.[6] It is further worth mentioning that the two accounts of the expedition (1761–1767) were published, while Guldberg was ascending to the pinnacle of his political power.[7] A canopic jar in his collection (inv. AAC 18) derives from the earlier expedition (1737–1738) of the naval-officer Frederik Ludvig Norden (1708–1742).[8]

The other notability present that evening, Prime Minister Joachim Godske Moltke (1746–1818), was the son of Adam Godske Molkte (1710–1792), who had served in high political posts under both Christian VI (1699–1746) and Frederik V (1723–1766)—the two kings that had furnished the expeditions. The esteem in which Zoëga held the accounts of these famous Danish travelers is

5 J. Wiedewelt, *Samling af ægyptiske og romerske oldsager*, I, (Kiøbenhavn, 1786). An entry in Zoëga's diary on the 15th of the April 1782, mentioning a "Catalog des Guldbergischen Cabinet", probably refers to him seeing a draft of this catalogue, V. Hermansen "Fra Kunstkammer til Antik-Cabinet", in *Antik-Cabinettet 1851. Udgivet i hundredaaret af Nationalmuseet*, redigeret af Anonymous, (København: Gyldendal 1951), 42 with n. 106. For a general study of the catalogue, see A.H. Hansen, V. Nørskov, H. Thomsen, "Artist and Antiquary. Wiedewelt's Catalogue of Egyptian and Roman Antiquities, 1786", in *Johannes Wiedewelt. A Danish Artist in Search of the Past, Shaping the Future*, Acta Hyperborea 11, edited by M. Nielsen, A. Rathje, (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), 241–257.

6 Hermansen, "Fra Kunstkammer til Antik-Cabinet", 44–45.

7 C. Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien aus eigenen Beobachtungen und im Lande selbst gesammleten Nachrichten* (Kopenhagen: Nicolaus Möller, 1772); Id., *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern*, I–II, (Kopenhagen: Nicolaus Möller, 1774–1778). The five Egyptian objects in the Høegh-Guldberg collection are rendered in latter work on pl. XLII.

8 F.L. Norden, *Voyage d'Égypte et de Nubie*, (A Copenhague: La Maison Royale des Orphelins, 1755). The canopic jar is reproduced on pl. LV.

attested by wealth of references to them in his works and correspondence; further in his minute hand-copies of the plates amongst his unpublished papers.[9]

The Artist

It seems evident—although the sources are silent on this point—that Zoëga during his stay also met Wiedewelt, the harbinger of Neoclassicism in Denmark and the most influential artist before Thorvaldsen. He was then longstanding director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and was at the time working on the decoration of the coin-cabinet at Rosenborg.[10] He had been the first Danish 'travelling subject' in Rome, where he had formed a close friendship to Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) and studied under Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), who in 1769 wrote his famous *apologia* for Egyptian art.[11] The influence of the latter upon Wiedewelt is seen in his monumental funeral art, where he frequently uses 'Egyptianising' motives; for instance the sarcophagus of King Christian VI in the Cathedral of Roskilde which rests on four sphinxes, thus hinting at the King's interest in Egypt.[12]

In the preface to the above-mentioned catalogue, Wiedewelt stresses the importance for the study of antiquity of the truthful and correct rendering of objects—a focal point in Zoëga's later oeuvre:

> The greatest possible care has been taken to depict everything correctly. Nothing has been added or subtracted and the flaws of the originals have been retained in the drawings. Connoisseurs rightfully demand to see the objects in this manner and I have taken utmost care to fulfill this ideal.[13]

It is clear from a letter written by Zoëga to Friedrich Münter (1761–1830) in 1788 that he did not think that the plates in any way lived up to these standards;

9 NKS 367 b fol., II.1) *Delineationes Monumentorum Ægyptiacorum cum explicationibus et annotationibus*.

10 A.D. Jørgensen, *Georg Zoega, Et mindeskrift*, (København: Bianco Luno, 1881), 66–67.

11 G.B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizi desunte dall'architettura egizia, etrusca, e greca. Con un ragionamento apologetico in difesa dell'-architettura egizia, e Toscana*, (Roma: Salmoni, 1769), preface.

12 See in general, K. Kryger, "Wiedewelt and Allegory", in *Johannes Wiedewelt. A Danish Artist in Search of the Past, Shaping the Future*, 113–125.

13 Wiedewelt, *Samling af ægyptiske og romerske oldsager*, 1–2 (trans. from Danish).

more important in this context is however the question that he asks in the beginning of the letter:

> What kind of objects are Wiedewelt planning to include in the subsequent volumes of antiquities, which he in preface of the first promises to publish? I wished that he would include the mummies in Copenhagen and the results of the investigation that was performed on one of them.[14]

There can be no doubt that this is a reference to the unwrapping of a mummy on the 11th of December in 1781 by Professor Morten Thrane Brünnich (1737–1827) in the anatomical theater at the University of Copenhagen. Zoëga is more than likely to have been present at the event, since he was in the city and since Brünnich in the published description of the procedure, states that it was carried out under the auspices of Guldberg.[15]

'Ad usus publicos'

The stipend that Zoëga received in 1782 had been created in 1776 and was given first to the Orientalist Nicolai Christopher Kall (1749–1823), whose family Zoëga frequently frequented during his stay in Copenhagen. For the period 1777–1780 it had been awarded to the theologian Andreas Christian Hwiid (1749–1788), who in 1779 befriended Cardinal Stefano Borgia (1731–1804) as the first of the promising Danish scholars faring to Rome. Besides studying Syrian and Arabic, the purpose of his journey, he learned Ethiopic and Coptic. He did not publish anything of note, besides a sample of an important manuscript for Biblical criticism in the Barberini Library.[16] This he dedicated to Guldberg, who until the change of government in 1784 controlled and assigned the stipend.[17]

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14 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe un Dokumente*, II, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), 179, letter n. 353 (trans. from Danish).

15 M.T. Brünnich, "Historiske Beskrivelse over en Mumie, hvis Afvikling og Aabning foretoges i det Kiøbenhavnske Universitets Natur-Theater udi December Maaned 1781", in *Nye Samling af det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs Skrifter*, II, redigeret af Anonymous, (Kiøbenhavn: M. Hallager, 1783), 326–347.

16 A.C. Hwiid (ed.), *Specimen ineditae versionis arabico-samaritanae Pentaeuchi ed codice manuscript Bibliothecae Barberinae*, (Romae: Praesidum facultate, 1780).

17 For the Danish scholars and their relation to Cardinal Borgia, see Ø. Andreasen, "Kardinal Borgia og de danske i Rom" in *Rom og Danmark gennem Tiderne*, I, redigeret af L. Bobé, (København: Levin & Munksgaard, 1935), 268–313. For the Museo Borgiano in general,

The second Danish stipendiary in Rome was Jacob Georg Adler (1756–1834), who arrived in the city in December 1781 and left in spring 1782. The focus of his journey was again the study of the Oriental languages in relation to Biblical criticism.[18] He became a close friend of Borgia during his stay and published a catalogue of the Kufic coins in his museum.[19] It is noteworthy that he learned Coptic and was entrusted with the study of manuscript fragments in the Sahidic dialect, which Borgia at that time received from his missionaries in Egypt and several of which would later be published by Zoëga in his catalogue.[20] Adler studied Coptic not only because it was important for his Biblical studies, but also because he saw it as a linguistic source to the understanding of ancient Egyptian terminology.[21]

Another Danish scholar working in Rome during this period was Andreas Birch (1758–1829), who came to city in the summer of 1781, while Adler was still in there. Like the above-mentioned scholars the object of his study was Biblical manuscripts and he formed a close relationship to Borgia; unlike these however his travels were mainly funded by his own inheritance; after his return to Copenhagen in 1783, however, he received through the agency of Guldberg a sum of 2000 rix-dollar (rigsdaler) from '*ad usus publicos*' for the publication of his material from Rome. Birch was still in Rome, when Zoëga at end of January 1783 arrived in the City, and he was the one who introduced Zoëga to Borgia and in whose lodgings he met his coming wife, Maria (Mariuccia) Petruccioli (1765–1807).[22]

All three scholars communicated their variant readings from Bible manuscripts in Rome to the German theologian Johann David Michaëlis (1717–1791), who in 1761 had suggested Royal Danish expedition to Arabia Felix—both Hwiid and Birch had for a longer period studied under him in Göttingen. It is clear that Guldberg, when Zoëga received the stipend, had used '*ad usus publicos*' to further Oriental and Biblical studies in Denmark, thus continuing the educational and foreign policy instigated under Christian VI and Frederik V.

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see M. Nocca (a cura di), *Le quattro voci del mondo: arte, culture e saperi nella collezione di Stefano Borgia 1734–1804*, (Napoli: Electa, 2001).

18 He published an account of his travels, J.G.C. Adler, *Kurze Uebersicht seiner biblisch-kritischen Reise nach Rom*, (Altona: J.D.A. Eckhardt, 1783).

19 J.G.C. Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris*, (Romae: Hafniae, 1782–1792).

20 G. Zoëga, *Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur*, (Romae: typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1810).

21 Adler, *Kurze Uebersicht seiner biblisch-kritischen Reise nach Rom*, 184–193.

22 Andreasen, "Kardinal Borgia og de danske i Rom", 289–291.

"Curious Stones"

On the 14th of May, two days after his departure from Copenhagen, Zoëga wrote a letter to Heyne, wherein he briefly reported that he the day before had found the lids of two Egyptian stone sarcophagi at Funen (Fyn)—one with a long hieroglyphic inscription (fig. 11.1). Both of them had served as watering troughs for horses.[23] Some weeks later he provided the classicist Abraham Kall (1743–1821)—a close friend and the older brother of the above-mentioned Nicolai Christopher—with a long and detailed description of them:

> (…) They are every in respect—their concave as well as their convex side—made like those lids of mummy-coffins in wood that one normally sees in the museums (…) it has given me great pleasure to meet in these two pieces the two different styles of Egyptian art that I always thought were present in the original Egyptian works: one whose character is indecisiveness and swollenness in some parts and an excessive dryness in others, which directs the thoughts towards the most ancient and least practiced times; another which mostly consist of straight lines that in their hardness show a simplicity and nobility that I hold to be the style that was authorized by the laws.
>
> Here you have my thoughts on these curious stones, another more systematic and insightful description I expect to read by you, since I know that amongst antiquities you are especially interested in the Egyptian (…).[24]

Although still indebted to Winckelmann and his exposition in *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* the description demonstrates Zoëga's instinctive feeling for and appreciation of Egyptian art.[25] The reference to Plato's *De legibus* is worth noting, since Zoëga during his last months in Copenhagen had studied his authorship intensely and made excerpts thereof.[26] The allusion to Abraham Kall's interest in ancient Egypt might at first seem surprising, since he never published anything on the subject. His dissertation of 1762 however had been devoted

23 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 273, letter n. 171. The sarcophagi, today at The National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen (inv. AAa 13, AAa 14), had been brought from Egypt to Denmark by the nobleman Jesper Friis (1593–1643). For their tumultuous history, see V. Hermansen, "Jesper Friis til Ørbæklunde og hans Kunstkammer", in *Folkeliv og Kulturlevn, studier tilegnet Kai Uldall 14. september 1960*, redigeret af B. Stoklund, (København: Nationalmuseet, 1960), 277–294.

24 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 280, letter n. 175 (trans. from Danish).

25 J.-J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, (Dresden, 1764), 31–80.

26 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 260, letter n. 157 (to Heyne, 22 January 1782).

to a fifteenth-century paper manuscript in his father's library, the Orientalist Johan Christian Kall (1714–1775), containing amongst ancient Greek fabulists and mythographers, a still unpublished version of Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica* (fol. 56v–77v).[27] It was Zoëga initial idea that the two sarcophagi should be transferred to the Høegh-Guldberg collection, but this plan was not realized before the change of government in 1784, when Guldberg was removed to Aarhus to a post as prefect ("stiftamtsmand"). They were instead acquired by Abraham Kall, who placed them in front of his residence in central Copenhagen, where Zoëga had been a welcome guest during his second and last stay in the city.

Conclusion

> Meine Gedanken sind izt in Egiptin u. Morgenland, u. bey all den alten aus der Mode gegangenen Göttern.[28]

The biographers of Zoëga have had a tendency to view his Egyptian studies as something extraneous and alien, which was forced upon him first by Borgia and then by the Pope.[29] This contribution has hopefully demonstrated that he upon arrival in Rome on the 30th of January 1783 was both well-informed about the subject and had formed close ties to an influential scholarly circle in Denmark with interests in Oriental studies. I consider these experiences a prerequisite for a proper evaluation of the beginning of his career as an antiquarian and it seems unlikely that, without them, he would have been drawn towards the study of ancient Egypt. This contribution has only dealt with Oriental studies in Denmark immediately before and during his stay in Copenhagen and it is clear that a more detailed study, which had included his initial work upon Egyptian antiquities in the Borgia collection, would have produced further and new information on the impact and influence of these encounters.[30]

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27 Today in The Royal Library: Add. 275, 4°, see B. Schartau, *Codices Graeci Haunienses: Ein descriptiver Katalog des griechischen Handschriftenbestandes der königlichen Bibliothek Kopenhagen*, (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1994), 460–464.

28 Andreasen, *Georg Zoega*, 319, letter n. 200 (to W.C. Zoëga, 10 January 1784).

29 See e.g. K.F. Johansen "Georg Zoëga og Rom", in *Rom og Danmark gennem Tiderne*, I, 245–246.

30 Already in 1784 Zoëga had begun working upon a catalogue of Egyptian antiquities in the Borgia Museum. The original catalogue—including around 700 numbers—is found amongst his papers at The Royal Library in Copenhagen, NKS 367b fol., III.1) *Catalogo dei monumenti Egiziani in Velletri nel Museo Borgiano. 1784*. It is written in a different hand, but is interspersed with extensive corrections and additions by Zoëga himself from the years 1785–1788.

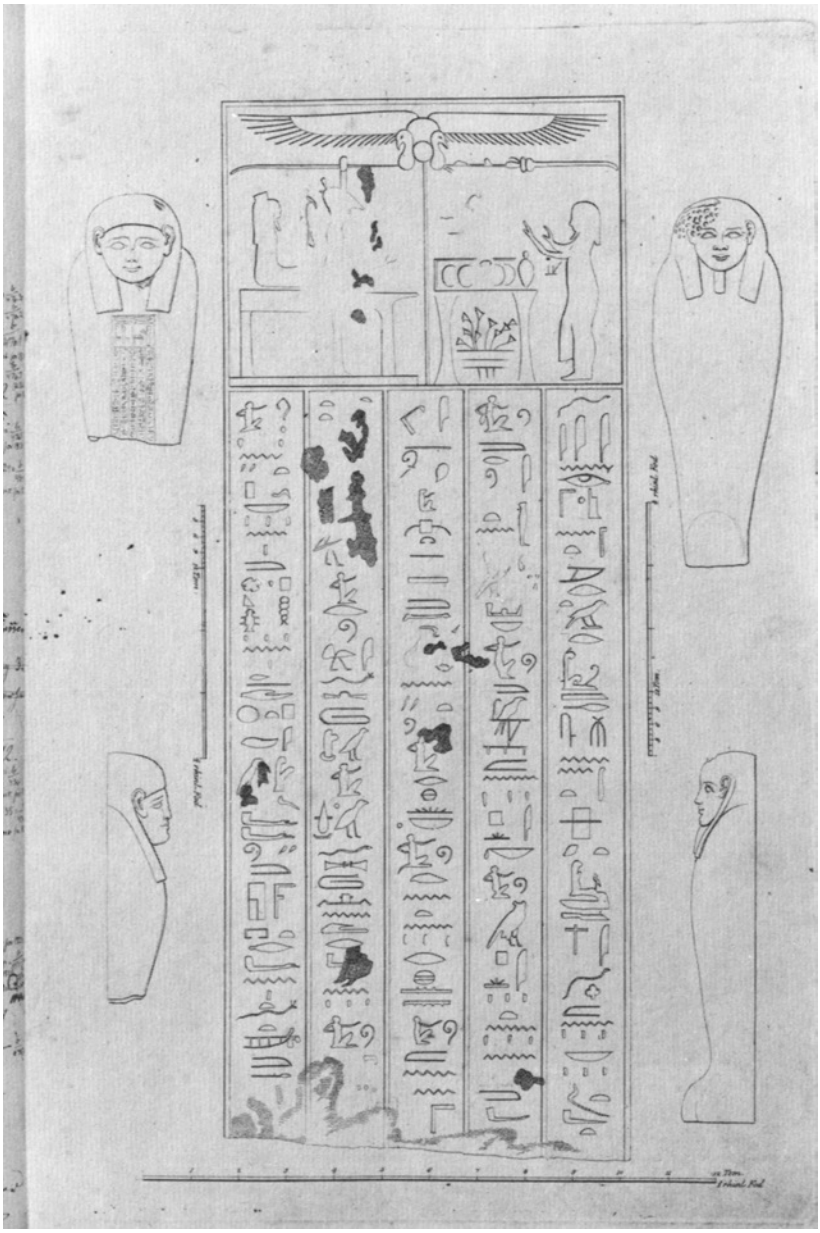

FIGURE 11.1 *Engraving from 1826 in the inventory of The National Museum of Denmark showing the two Egyptian sarcophagi that Zoëga found on Funen (Fyn) in 1782.*

CHAPTER 12

In visita alla 'Grande Galleria': l'antico Egitto a Firenze

Maria Cristina Guidotti

Fra il 3 luglio e il 9 settembre del 1789, lo studioso danese Georg Zoëga fece un viaggio lungo l'Italia, da Roma a Venezia, toccando anche le città di Firenze e di Bologna. Di questo viaggio Zoëga redasse giorno per giorno un diario dal titolo *Diarium itineris Roma Venetias et retro facti Lugl. 3–Settemb. 9. 1789* e numerose altre note dal titolo *Monumenti antichi osservati nel viaggio fatto nell'anno 1789 nei mesi di Luglio, Agosto, Settembre*, che si conservano presso la Biblioteca Reale di Copenhagen.[1] Questi manoscritti sono stati pubblicati in gran parte da Daniela Picchi:[2] la studiosa, dopo averli trascritti, si è dedicata al commento delle sole parti riguardanti le soste di Zoëga a Bologna e a Venezia, individuando i reperti archeologici visti dal Danese in quelle città. Molto gentilmente mi ha quindi trasmesso la parte di testo riguardante la visita a Firenze,[3] ed è proprio di questa visita che tratta il mio contributo.

Zoëga si fermò a Firenze per circa dieci giorni, arrivando l'8 luglio e ripartendo nel pomeriggio del 16; nel suo diario annotò esattamente le persone incontrate, i luoghi visitati e soprattutto gli oggetti visti durante queste sue visite. In quei giorni di permanenza[4] ebbe l'occasione di incontrare diverse personalità illustri, fra cui il bibliotecario Angelo Maria Bandini[5] e il direttore della Galleria Granducale Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni,[6] nonché di visitare le famose biblioteche fiorentine di cui tuttora può vantarsi la città di Firenze: la Laurenziana, la Marucelliana, la Riccardiana e la Magliabechiana. Numerose ore furono trascorse inoltre dallo studioso nella grande Galleria Granducale, ovvero gli Uffizi. Zoëga si recò alla Galleria quasi ogni giorno (il 9, 11, 13, 14, 15

1 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 1 + 3, 2.

2 D. Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia: le antichità egiziane di Bologna e di Venezia da un inedito di Georg Zoëga*, (Imola: La Mandragora, 2010).

3 Ringrazio Daniela Picchi per avermi trasmesso la trascrizione del manoscritto di Zoëga: senza il suo paziente lavoro non avrei potuto dare il mio contributo al convegno, ma soprattutto sarebbe mancata questa importantissima testimonianza sulla consistenza della collezione egizia Granducale alla fine del Settecento.

4 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 41–45.

5 Ibid., 19 nota 28.

6 Ibid., 42 nota 135.

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e 16 di luglio), e di tutto quanto vide esposto nelle sale fece un resoconto dettagliato nel suo diario, arricchendolo anche con disegni particolareggiati. Si tratta degli oggetti archeologici etruschi, greci, romani ed egizi appartenenti alle collezioni Granducali: il suo diario risulta dunque importantissimo per determinare la consistenza dei reperti a quella data, e grazie ad esso è possibile fare un interessante riscontro fra quanto vide all'epoca lo studioso e quanto si conserva ancora a Firenze, in particolare presso i Musei Archeologico ed Egizio. Circa un secolo dopo la visita di Zoëga infatti questi Musei furono allestiti nell'attuale sede, dove i reperti archeologici, etruschi, classici ed egizi furono trasferiti.

Ho cercato di individuare nelle descrizioni del diario di Zoëga gli oggetti egizi attualmente conservati a Firenze, lasciando ai colleghi che si occupano di etruscologia e di archeologia classica l'individuazione e l'esame degli altri materiali, in un futuro che ci si augura prossimo. Lo studioso descrive circa un centinaio di oggetti, che costituivano l'allora collezione egizia Granducale, dislocata in ambienti diversi a seconda del tipo di materiale. Per identificare questo centinaio di reperti bisogna innanzitutto ripercorrere la storia della composizione della collezione egizia Granducale. Le prime notizie di acquisizioni di antichità egizie da parte dei Granduchi di Lorena si hanno durante la cosiddetta Reggenza di Francesco Stefano (1737–1765): nel 1753 vennero donati da Carlo Stendardi, console in Algeri, degli *ushabti* e dei bronzetti.[7] Le descrizioni sommarie nei documenti di archivio non hanno permesso di individuare questi reperti fra il materiale del Museo Egizio di Firenze. È stato identificato invece con qualche probabilità un frammento di statua arrivato poco tempo dopo nelle Collezioni Granducali, acquistato a Livorno:[8] si tratta della parte inferiore di un portatore di stele magica di Horo sui coccodrilli, la cui parte superiore si conserva presso il Museo Egizio di Torino, e che apparteneva alla collezione seicentesca di Athanasius Kircher.[9] Pare strano che Zoëga non menzioni questa statua, che all'epoca sicuramente doveva trovarsi nella Grande Galleria.

Con il successore di Francesco Stefano, Pietro Leopoldo di Lorena (1765–1790), si ebbero diversi incrementi della collezione egizia Granducale, e finalmente ci è arrivata anche una documentazione su quanto è stato acquisito in

7 P.R. Del Francia, "I Lorena e la nascita del Museo Egizio fiorentino", in *L'Egitto fuori dell'Egitto. Dalla riscoperta all'Egittologia, Atti del Convegno Internazionale Bologna 26–29 marzo 1990*, a cura di C. Morigi Govi, S. Curto, S. Pernigotti, (Bologna: CLUEB, 1991), 173.

8 Ibid., 173–174.

9 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 8708; il frammento di statua è stato ricongiunto al frammento del Museo Egizio di Torino in occasione di una mostra: E. Lo Sardo (a cura di), *Athanasius Kircher. Il museo del mondo*, (Roma: De Luca, 2001), 128 n. 43.

quel periodo.[10] Si tratta in pratica del materiale che Zoëga vide nelle sue visite alla Galleria, costituito soprattutto dai reperti di due collezioni del Console imperiale e toscano in Alessandria d'Egitto Giovanni Francesco Agostini, acquisite nel 1777 ca. e nel 1786: si tratta di bronzetti, *ushabti*, statuette, scarabei. A questo periodo risale anche il ritrovamento, in un cantiere di Firenze, della parte superiore di una statua raffigurante la dea Iside (fig. 12.1);[11] Zoëga la descrive e parla del suo rinvenimento:

> Basalte nero. Frammento. Testa e petto nudo d'una figura muliebre, colla cuffia commune vergata, un'imposta sopra la testa ed un appoggio di schiena, sul quale sono conservati i geroglifici. Maniera elegante che sembra tirare al Greco. Questo pezzo è stato trovato in Firenze: scavando per i fondamenti dell'oratorio dei Filippini.[12]

Di altri reperti acquisiti durante il Granducato di Pietro Leopoldo di Lorena, come la statua di sfinge[13] e l'obelisco della collezione Vecchietti,[14] arrivati alla Galleria l'anno prima della sua visita, Zoëga non fa inspiegabilmente cenno, ma forse non si trovavano ancora all'interno delle sale visitate.

Per eseguire il riscontro ho inizialmente incrociato le descrizioni di Zoëga con i dati dell'elenco dei reperti della collezione egizia Granducale, quale risulta dall'inventario del Museo Egizio di Firenze, datato 1856. Ricordiamo infatti che nel 1855, con la nascita del Museo, gli oggetti archeologici egizi conservati nelle Gallerie degli Uffizi furono trasferiti presso il cenacolo delle Monache di Fuligno, insieme ai reperti provenienti dalla famosa Spedizione Franco-Toscana di Ippolito Rosellini, e furono tutti inventariati dall'archeologo Michele Arcangelo Migliarini.[15] Per alcuni oggetti le descrizioni troppo generiche fornite da Zoëga non permettono assolutamente l'identificazione.

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10 Del Francia, "I Lorena e la nascita del Museo Egizio fiorentino", 174–175.

11 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 313: Del Francia, "I Lorena e la nascita del Museo Egizio fiorentino", 175–176; M.C. Guidotti (a cura di), *Le donne dei faraoni. Il mondo femminile nell'antico Egitto*, (Milano: SEB, 2003), 47 (con bibliografia precedente).

12 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 2 "Luglio 15.".

13 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 552, inedita.

14 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 3686: H. Beck, P.C. Bol, M. Bückling (hrsgg.), *Ägypten Griechenland Rom. Abwehr und Berührung*, (Frankfurt am Main – Tübingen – Berlin: Liebighaus, Museum alter Plastik – Wasmuth, 2005), 728–729 n. 343.

15 Su questo personaggio cfr. N. Nieri, *Arcangelo Michele Migliarini (1779–1865) etruscologo ed egittologo*, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche, filologiche, serie 6, 3.6, (Roma: Bardi, 1931), 401–543; M.C. Guidotti, "Lettere di Ippolito Rosellini a Michele Arcangelo Migliarini", in *Talking along the Nile. Ippolito Rosellini, travellers and*

Si tratta ad esempio dei numerosi bronzetti raffiguranti il dio Osiride o la dea Iside in atto di allattare il piccolo Horo:

> 39./ Parecchi Osiridi mumiaci coi soliti attributi.
> 40./ Parecchie Isidi sedenti col figlio in seno.[16]

Per quanto riguarda gli *ushabti* e gli amuleti il lavoro di riscontro, molto difficoltoso per la stessa ragione, è ancora in corso. Per altri oggetti invece l'identificazione è stata relativamente più semplice, mentre per alcuni è stata addirittura immediata, trattandosi di opere molto famose e ben riconoscibili. Fra queste ultime vorrei riportare la descrizione che Zoëga ha fatto nel suo diario per una statua e per una statuetta.

La prima è la famosa statua di Ptahmose (fig. 12.2), gran sacerdote di Ptah a Menfi, arrivata alle Collezioni Granducali prima del 1738, ma la cui acquisizione rimane sconosciuta.[17] La statua doveva aver colpito molto Zoëga, poiché egli si sofferma in una descrizione molto particolareggiata, soprattutto della testa del personaggio, che occupa diverse pagine del diario e che è corredata da numerosi disegni, con riportate anche le iscrizioni in geroglifici:

> (…) Le braccia sono lavorate con una certa morbidezza. di muscolatura o d'ossatura non evvi alcun principio: neppure le caviglia dei piedi sono indicati. Le orecchie restano nascoste sotto la zazzera, la quale a linee composte di gocce o per meglio dire di fiocchetti cade dal vertice come da un centro commune verso tutte le parti. La fronte è quasi tutta coperta dalla zazzera. Il riccio che cade dall'orecchio d. e s'intorcina sulla spalla è massiccia ed è vergato per tutta la sua lunghezza come per indicare i denti del pettine ovvero i gruppi dei capelli. […] Il volto è largo e piatto; il naso è rotto, ma era moresco; la bocca è larga e grossolana cogli angoli insu; il mento è largo e secco come suole essere negli Etiopi; le guance sono pienotte. Le labbra sono contornate da un filo, che separa il rosso dalla pelle bianca del volto. le ciglia sono indicate con una striscia piatta come riportata sopra l'osso della fronte. (…)[18]

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scholars of the 19th century in Egypt. Proceedings of the International Conference Pisa 2012, a cura di M. Betrò, G. Miniaci, (Pisa: University Press, 2013), 131–136.

16 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 2 "Luglio 11.".

17 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 1790: M. Betrò (a cura di), *Lungo il Nilo. Ippolito Rosellini e la Spedizione Franco-Toscana in Egitto (1828–1829)*, (Firenze – Milano: Giunti, 2010), 42 n. 1 (con bibliografia precedente).

18 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 3.5 + 3.6.

È da notare che in genere Zoëga riporta le iscrizioni in geroglifici con molta esattezza (teniamo presente che ancora non erano stati decifrati), fatto che ha aiutato anche nell'identificazione dei reperti.

Un altro oggetto molto famoso è stato descritto con dovizia di particolari dallo studioso danese. Si tratta della statuetta raffigurante il dio del Nilo Hapi (fig. 12.3),[19] che presenta una integrazione settecentesca del busto:

> 56./ Rosso antico. Lavoro Greco elegante. Altezza forse 2/3 di palmo. La testa pare moderna ella è ricciuta a ciocche eleganti. Un uomo nudo fuori del vergato grembiule sta dritto in piedi avanzando molto il piede destro col petto insensibilmente piegato, e con tutte due le mani e braccia sostiene orizzontalmente una tavola esattamente quadrata sulla cui superficie si vedono di rilievo piatto. [disegno] Vicino all'orlo di tutti i quattro margini escono in gran numero come della canne sottili e pieghevoli, le quali voltandosi sopra l'orlo e sopra le braccia che supportano la tavoletta pendono perpendicolari sino in terra, onde vengono a formare una specie di pilastro di cui la tavoletta sarebbe la cima e la quale non tocca della figura altro che la coscia e gamba sinistra. Attaccato a queste cannucce osservasi gran numero di foglie, fiori e frutti, che sembrano nascere da esser canne: ed oltre di questo al lato destro cinque oche legate coi piedi alle canne colle teste pendenti ingiu e rialzate come uccelli vivi legati in questa maniera sogliono ripiegare la testa. I fiori e frutti sono di tre fogge: [disegno] Dal lato sinistro pendono inoltre due pesci grandicelli legati colle teste all'ingiu.[20]

I bronzetti appartenenti alla collezione Granducale erano numerosi, e Zoëga ha descritto tutti quelli visti, sia egizi che classici. Sul suo diario si legge:

> Luglio 11 Stanza dei bronzi della galleria granducale. N. dove non è indicata altra materia, intendesi di bronzo, e dove non si parla della maniera intendesi di quello stile che sogliamo trovare nelli piccoli idoli Egiziani. La grandezza s'intende mezzana.[21]

19 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 543: H. Whitehouse, "The fish-offerer in Florence", in *Decorum and experience essays in ancient culture for John Baines*, edited by E. Frood, A. McDonald, (Oxford: Griffith Institute Publications, 2013), 180–184 (con bibliografia precedente).

20 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 2 "Luglio 11.".

21 Ibid.

Segue la descrizione delle statuette; per alcuni bronzetti egizi sono bastate poche parole per identificarli:

> 61./ Uomo imberbe, dritto in piedi coi piedi uniti, le mani alle cosce, in testa la scuffia commune vergata e sopra il vertice un [disegno]
> 24./ Gatto grandicello sedente sulle natiche, con un gattino avanti se che siede nella medesima maniera colla testa voltata via dalla madre.[22]

Si tratta di due bronzetti raffiguranti la dea Nekhbet il primo e un gatto con gattino il secondo;[23] in altri casi l'identificazione rimane probabile o dubbia.

Oltre ai bronzetti, alle statue, agli amuleti e agli *ushabti*, Zoëga descrive due statue in legno di Ptah-Sokaris-Osiride, identificati,[24] e altri reperti ancora da individuare. Sono certa che al termine del lungo lavoro di riscontro si possa arrivare ad avere almeno il quadro completo della consistenza del materiale archeologico, non solo egizio, conservato presso la Galleria Granducale fiorentina nel 1789.

FIGURE 12.1 *Parte superiore di una statua raffigurante la dea Iside, Museo Egizio di Firenze, inv. n. 313.*

22 Ibid.

23 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. n. 23 e n. 3802, inediti.

24 Museo Egizio di Firenze inv. nn. 126–127, inediti.

FIGURE 12.2 *Statua del gran sacerdote di Ptah a Menfi Ptahmose, Museo Egizio di Firenze, inv. n. 1790.*

FIGURE 12.3 *Statuetta raffigurante il dio Hapi, Museo Egizio di Firenze, inv. n. 543.*

CHAPTER 13

The Egyptian Antiquities in Bologna and Venice at Zoëga's Time

Daniela Picchi

In a letter to Joseph Eckhel of 1785 Zoëga described how his interest and awareness of ancient Egypt had grown as a result of his studies on the Alexandrinian coins in the Borgia collection:

> Monsignore [*scil.* Stefano Borgia] formò il progetto di pubblicare la serie Eggizziana in rami accompagnati d'un catalogo che unisse tutte le medaglie imperiali coniate nell'Egitto fin ora conosciute (…). Sono in questa occasione entrato in varie ricerche sopra le antichità Egizzie, aiutato da una ricca collezione di monumenti di questa nazione vicino al numero di 300 pezzi, che possiede Msgre (*scil.* Monsignore) in Velletri, e dei quali in breve si darà una scelta: ed ho nelle note a quelle medaglie, ch'alla antica mitologia mi sono parse allusive, trattato di parecchie materie qui appartenenti. Mi sono accorto bensì d'essermi lanciato in un mare molto vasto e molto impetuoso, ma quando già era tardi per ravvolger le vele (…).[1]

After the publication of *Numi Aegyptii imperatori prostantes in museo Borgiano Velitris* in 1787,[2] Zoëga continued to deepen his knowledge of ancient Egypt according to a by then well defined methodological study sequence, which had its preliminary step in direct material observation and cataloguing. In particular, a tour from Rome to Venice through the main libraries and antiquarian collections of northern Italy in 1789 offered him the occasion to study some hundreds of Egyptian antiquities, largely unknown even to scholars. Although the official purpose of Zoëga's journey was the collation of the Venetian manuscripts of the Old Testament in the *Septuaginta* version,[3] his travel diary *Diarium itineris Roma Venetias et retro facti Lugl. 3–Settemb. 9. 1789*[4] and his

1 Letter n. 270 published in Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013). Zoëga's correspondence will be cited after this volume.

2 See in this volume Laurent Bricault.

3 Letters nn. 365, 370, 377, 382, 387, 395.

4 NKS 357b fol., III, 3, 1.

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notes *Monumenti antichi osservati nel viaggio fatto nell'anno 1789 nei mesi di Luglio, Agosto, Settembre*[5] mainly highlight his interest in Egyptian antiquities.[6]

Zoëga had already been commissioned by Pope Pius VI to write the *De origine et usu obeliscorum* and was looking for hieroglyphic inscriptions to compare them with those on obelisks.[7] In Zoëga's opinion, the code of Egyptian writing system had to be cracked to understand—of course—the still hidden meaning of the obelisks' inscriptions and—more in general—the religious beliefs and the life-habits of a civilization closely related to the classical ones, but mostly 'unrevealed'. For these reasons, taking the opportunity of the journey, he paid great attention to all the Egyptian antiquities preserved in Florence, Bologna, Padua, and Venice, collecting every kind of information about their texts, decorations, materials, state of conservation, size, and features. Thanks to his detailed descriptions and sketches, it is now possible to identify most of these antiquities—in the worst cases from a typological point of view at least—, as well as to follow their movements from one collection to another, from one city to another in later centuries.

By comparing Zoëga's notes and letters with other archive documents,[8] Bologna and Venice turn out to be inextricably linked together. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, after the fall of the Serenissima in Austrian hands in 1797, in fact, many Egyptian antiquities were moved from the Venetian house museums to the Pelagio Palagi collection, which is the core of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna, where this research on Zoëga started a few years ago.[9] Given the close relationship between these two cities, their importance for the history of collecting and museology—it is uncertain in which one the first public museum was opened—, this paper will deal only with Zoëga's manuscripts relating to them[10] and the Egyptian antiquities documented there at the end of the eighteenth century.[11]

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5 NKS 357b fol., III, 3, 2; 3, 3.1–11; 3, 4.

6 See also letter n. 401.

7 See in this volume Paul Frandsen and Emanuele M. Ciampini.

8 Most of them are preserved at the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna (BCABO), and at the Archivio di Stato, Venice (ASVe).

9 See D. Picchi, "Le antichità egiziane di Pelagio Palagi e il mercato antiquario veneziano", *EDAL* 1 (2009), 35–40. This research represents an important step of the Archive Project launched by the Egyptian Department of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna.

10 With regard to Florence, see in this volume Maria Cristina Guidotti. See also NKS 357b fol., III, 3, 2; 3.4–5.

11 This paper will reconsider and update what has been published with an ample bibliography in D. Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia: le antichità egiziane di Bologna e di Venezia da un inedito di Georg Zoëga*, (Imola: La Mandragora, 2010); Ead., "L'Egitto esibito: in visita con Georg Zoëga alle dimore veneziane di fine Settecento", in *Venezia e l'Egitto*, a cura di

Zoëga arrived in Bologna on the 17th of July and stayed in town only three days, during which he visited the museum of the local Institute of Sciences and the private collection of Giacomo Biancani Tazzi, then director of the Institute.[12] The Egyptian antiquities preserved at Biancani's home were few and small sized—only amulets and bronzes—,[13] whereas the ones displayed at the Institute, about fifty, were interesting for their typological variety, richness of inscriptions, and decorations. The latter had been mainly collected over two centuries and in different antiquarian markets by the Bolognese Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605), Ferdinando Cospi (1606–1686), Ferdinando Marsili (1658–1730), and Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758; pope from 1740), whose purpose had been that of promoting scientific studies in their native town.

In the Institute of Sciences, Zoëga was primarily interested in the thirty-eight Egyptian antiquities with inscriptions, and in particular in four mummies[14] and two anthropoid coffins.[15] Without his notes, it would have been impossible to document the characteristics of three of these mummies—no longer preserved or visible—, to recompose their *cartonnage*,[16] which are currently fragmented and incomplete, to establish the *terminus ante quem* of some restorations made to a very unusual coffin[17] and to determine the production period of a child's coffin, which is a very intriguing fake.[18] Zoëga did not understand that the inscriptions on the two coffins had been partially integrated or were false, thus copying them as interesting case studies. Conversely, taking notes on the famous relief of Nectanebo I,[19] which had been found in Rome

E.M. Dal Pozzolo, R. Dorigo, M.P. Pedani, (Venezia: Skira, 2011), 195–199; Ead., "Dai Nani di San Trovaso a Pelagio Palagi: formazione e diaspora di una collezione veneziana", in *Frammenti d'Egitto*, a cura di P. Zanovello, E.M. Ciampini, (Venezia: CLEUP, 2012), 89–103.

12 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 21–26, 55–73.

13 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 2 "Luglio 18. Nel Museo del Sig. Giacomo Biancani a Bologna" + 3, 3.6.

14 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 2 "Al Museo dell'Istituto di Bologna"; 3, 3.1 + 3.7–8.

15 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 3.1 "Cassa di piccola mumia" and "Geroglifici della cassa grande".

16 With regard to one of these *cartonnage* (MCABO EG 2000–2002, 2004), see D. Picchi, "*Cartonnage* di mummia", in *Restituzioni 2013. Tesori d'arte restaurati*, a cura di C. Bertelli, G. Bonsanti, (Venezia: Skira, 2013, http://restituzioni.marsilioeditori.it/2013/), 39–41.

17 MCABO EG 1963. See D. Picchi, "The anthropoid coffin of Mesiset (?): an intriguing history of collecting, typological study and diagnostic investigation", in *First Vatican Coffin Conference*, edited by A. Amenta, C. Greco, H. Guichard, (Città del Vaticano: Edizioni Vaticane), in print.

18 MCABO EG 3706. See MCABO, Archivio Storico, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. R. Università di Bologna. Inventario delle proprietà mobili dello Stato esistenti al 31 Dicembre 1870*, nn. 40660–40661.

19 MCABO EG 1870.

near the Santa Prisca church in 1709 and later donated to Bologna by Pope Benedict XIV, he suggested the right integration of a male figure into the *lacuna* wrongly integrated by Francesco Ficoroni and Johann J. Winckelmann with a centaur.[20] At the same time, a false relief inscribed with a mix of selected parts of the Nectanebo I relief was only mentioned by him as a stone slab with "geroglifici volgari".[21] It is thus evident that Zoëga's vast knowledge and aptitude for languages—he must be considered first and foremost a philologist—was not yet supported by an adequate experience of the hieroglyphic texts and stylistic criteria of Egyptian art, which he was trying to increase with the direct study of objects and inscriptions. With regard to the other Egyptian antiquities belonging to the Institute of Sciences, Zoëga listed them briefly, after once again transcribing the hieroglyphs painted on the front and back of a Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statue. Thanks to this drawing most of a now deleted text is known.[22]

After this brief permanence in Bologna, Zoëga moved to Venice, where he stayed from the 22nd of July to the 6th of September.[23] Thanks to the recommendation letters of Cardinal Borgia and his fame as a scholar, which preceded him everywhere, in a short time Zoëga gained the consideration of many notables of the Republic and, thus, had free access to their antiquarian assets, consisting of manuscripts, gems, coins, inscriptions, sculptures, and Egyptian antiquities.

It is not surprising that Venetian families owned Egyptian objects. The centuries-old relations of the Serenissima with the Near East, long before the Napoleonic rediscovery of Egypt, made the arrival in the lagoon of exotic artefacts easier. The generic definition of 'idols' in the inventories of the oldest collections may sometime hide Egyptian small bronzes, amulets, and other *funeralia*—very common from the end of the sixteenth century onwards—, as well as stone items of larger size, whose transport was not too much of a problem for the sea captains of the Republic.

The 'knowledge' of ancient Egypt even followed other pathways. The Venetian families with political-diplomatic duties at the Holy See, in fact, owned extensive properties in Rome and, there, they became familiar with the Egyptian monuments imported by the Roman emperors, that the yards of

20 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 3.7. See also D. Picchi, "Il generale Luigi Ferdinando Marsili e le prime antichità egizie dell'Istituto delle Scienze di Bologna", in *Antichità egizie e Italia: prospettive di ricerca e indagini sul campo*, a cura di P. Zanovello, E.M. Ciampini, (Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari—Digital Publishing, 2014), in print.

21 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 3.6 "Al Museo dell'Istituto Luglio 20" = MCABO EG 3707.

22 Ibid. = MCABO EG 335.

23 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 27–37, 73–111; Ead., "L'Egitto esibito", 195–199.

the *Renovatio urbi*, initiated at the behest of Pope Sixtus V (1520–1590, Pope from 1585), brought to light among a variety of classical antiquities.

In spite of this centuries-old frequentation of the Pharaonic culture and unlike what happened in Bologna, Egyptian objects were poorly documented in Venice till the end of the eighteenth century, in other words till Zoëga's arrival. The travel diary and notes written by Zoëga give us the tools for a first numerical and typological quantification of the antiquities collected by wealthy Venetian families, at least the ones who opened their palaces to the Danish scholar.

First of all Zoëga established a privileged relationship with Giacomo Nani (1725–1797).[24] The Dane had great interest in the Nani of San Trovaso house museum—the most famous one in Venice for Egyptian antiquities—, which he visited many times from the 14th of August onwards. Zoëga carefully examined and described the Nani Egyptian collection in the manuscript *Monumenti antichi osservati nel viaggio fatto nell'anno 1789*[25] and in other loose papers.[26] As usual, Zoëga's descriptions of the objects are very detailed and sometime include the provenance "Egitto" or "Dall'Egitto", in addition to sizes, materials, and drawings. By comparing these notes with the engravings *Indici e tavole dei marmi antichi scritti e figurati componenti il Museo Nani*, printed in 1791,[27] and with the later catalogue *Collezione di tutte le antichità che si conservano nel Museo Naniano*, edited by Francesco Driuzzo in 1815, these objects may be counted, considered from a typological point of view, and in large part found in their actual location.

At Zoëga's time the about sixty Egyptian antiquities collected by Giacomo Nani after the death of his brother Bernardo in 1761 were preserved in different areas of the San Trovaso palace: ten stone monuments were displayed in the main atrium, whereas about fifty small artefacts—shabtis, amulets, bronzes, etc.—were preserved in other unspecified rooms. Amongst the most interesting objects examined by Zoëga, three reliefs walled in on the left side of the atrium, whose provenance from the Memphite tomb of Ramsesemperra at Saqqara is certain, may be reported. One of them is now preserved at Bologna;[28] the location of the other two is still unknown. A stone anthropoid coffin dating

24 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 32–35, 73–94; Ead., "Dai Nani di San Trovaso a Pelagio Palagi", 89–103.

25 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 2 "Agosto 14.18.19. Al palazzo Nani a S. Trovaso".

26 NKS 357b fol., XIII, 3, 4.

27 BCVe, Cod. Cicogna, D 473/2, in particular pls. I–IV, VII and "Galleria del C.r Giacomo Nani P.V. a S. Trovaso".

28 MCABO EG 1913.

back to the XXX Dynasty or to the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period, traced only a few months ago to the Barracco Museum in Rome,[29] was placed against the central wall of the atrium. A red marble bust of Pharaoh Amasis (?), now in Florence at the Egyptian Museum,[30] and a Roman statue representing an hawk were respectively hung on the central and right walls of the atrium. The hawk statue is now in Bologna,[31] together with four canopic jars recognizable in the 1791 engravings—hung on the right and left walls—, but not mentioned by Zoëga.[32] And the list could continue with many other items not displayed in the atrium and not represented.

Zoëga, "padrone assoluto del suo [i.e. Nani] museo"—as he said in a letter to Friedrich Münter—,[33] had an important role even in the production of the above mentioned drawings and engravings, and it cannot be excluded that his declared intention in 1794 of reconsidering the catalogue of the Borgia Egyptian collection may derive from his Venetian experience, where he was completely free to organize his studies without the Cardinal's interference:

> Ho ancora ideato una classificazione di questi monumenti, secondo il figurato di essi, mediante la quale le descrizioni acquisterebbero piu precisone e chiarezza, si sfuggirebbero le ripetizioni e il tutt'assieme diverrebbe più commodo e istruttivo.[34]

At the express request of Giacomo Nani, who would certainly not have minded a catalogue of his Egyptian collection,[35] the Danish scholar was committed to select the most significant objects, personally following the sketches and final corrections of their drawings before the incision of the copper plates for printing. This work, initiated then at the end of Zoëga's stay in the lagoon, underwent a slowdown with his return to Rome and, shortly thereafter, with the death of the engraver to whom the copper plates had been commissioned and Borgia's request of his working only on the *De origine et usu obeliscorum* in 1792. The result, probably different from Nani's *desiderata*, was a work still in progress and consisted in seven engravings of *Monumenta Artis Ægyptiæ*

29 L. Sist, *Museo Barracco. Arte egizia*, Quaderno-3, (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1996), 98 (inv. n. 26).

30 Inv. n. 5625.

31 MCABO EG 408.

32 The four canopic jars are now preserved in Bologna (MCABO EG 3253–3255).

33 Letter n. 413.

34 Letter n. 646. See in this volume Rosanna Pirelli, Stefania Mainieri.

35 Letter n. 413.

in Musæo Naniano Venetiis,[36] which date to 1791 or immediately after. In addition to the three reliefs walled in the atrium (*Tab.* VII),[37] for the engravings Zoëga selected all the stone items—even those considered "lavoro dozzinale" or "negligente" or "andante"—and a typological sampling of the other materials: an elaborated bronze *sistrum* with a besoide handle (*Tab.* I);[38] an alabaster Osiris Hydrios (*Tab.* II);[39] a couple of bronze Horus Harpocrates and a wooden block-statuette (*Tab.* III, fig. 13.1);[40] the bust of a high official, a faïance shabti, the small statues of a queen and of a naophoro (*Tab.* IV);[41] the bust of an unknown king with *nemes*, a strange statuette, a few small bronzes and amulets (*Tab.* V);[42] other amulets, scarabs, and gems (*Tab.* VI, fig. 13.2).[43]

To these ready to print engravings, an unspecified number of other engravings with handwritten corrections by the Danish scholar must be added.[44] Many years later, their copper plates, more or less corrected, were used by Driuzzo in the catalogue *Collezione di tutte le antichità che si conservano nel Museo Naniano*. A second stay in Venice of Zoëga would have been necessary to complete this editorial project, but this did not happen and mainly for this reason Giacomo Nani's new Egyptian acquisitions were only partially documented by

36 Palagi's manuscripts in Bologna preserve five of these engravings (BCABO, GDS, AA.VV., Cart. XXXVI, nn. 13–17): see also Picchi, "Le antichità egiziane di Pelagio Palagi", fig. 3a–e; Ead., "Dai Nani di San Trovaso a Pelagio Palagi", 91–95. The letters between Zoëga and Giacomo Nani (nn. 486, 498 and 503) mention six engravings. The Thorvaldsens Museum posses seven of these engravings and their specimen proofs; see in this volume Kristine Bøggild Johannsen (cat. I.65–77).

37 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.77 (THMA, inv. n. E1353): Bologna, inv. n. MCABO EG 1913 (*Tab.* VII.2). Unknown the location of *Tab.* VII.1 and VII.3. See also cat. I.152–154.

38 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.65–66 (THMA, inv. nn. E1341–1342): Bologna, inv. n. MCABO EG 3110.

39 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.67–68 (THMA, inv. nn. E1343–1344): Bologna, inv. n. MCABO EG 1881. See also letter n. 723.

40 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.69–70 (THMA, inv. nn. E1345–1346): Bologna, inv. nn. MCABO EG 168 (*Tab.* III.3), 1845 (*Tab.* III.1–2). Unknown the location of *Tab.* III.1.

41 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.71–72 (THMA, inv. nn. E1347–1348): Venice, inv. n. MANVe, Correr 796 (*Tab.* IV.1–2); Bologna, inv. nn. MCABO EG 1807 (*Tab.* IV.3–5) and 1857 (*Tab.* IV.6–7). Unknown the location of *Tab.* IV.8–9.

42 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.73–74 (THMA, inv. nn. E1349–1350): Venice, inv. n. MANVe, Correr 795 (*Tab.* V.1–2) and 543 (*Tab.* V.19); Bologna, inv. nn. MCABO EG 42 (*Tab.* V.3), 245 (*Tab.* V.4–5), 598 (*Tab.* V.10), 683 (*Tab.* V.15–17), 183 or 184 (?) (*Tab.* V.6), 602 (?) (*Tab.* V.11). Unknown the location of *Tab.* V.7–8; 9; 12–14; 18.

43 Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.75–76 (THMA, inv. nn. E1351–1352): Bologna, inv. nn. MCABO EG 2714 (*Tab.* VI.2), 2589 (*Tab.* VI.3). Unknown the location of the other objects.

44 NKS 357b fol., II, 2.13. See also letters nn. 460, 468.

drawings and descriptions. For certain we know that before 1790 he bought other ten Egyptian antiquities, whose drawings were sent to Zoëga for a preliminary study—the drawing of a statue with basin preserved in Bologna is the only one traced up to now.[45] Even after Borgia's request that Zoëga only work on the *De origine et usu obeliscorum* in 1792, Giacomo Nani continued to acquire Egyptian antiquities, but not to send drawings to Zoëga. This perhaps explains the complete lack of documentation regarding an impressive sculpture of Agathodaimon, belonging to a high official named Uahibra,[46] whose size, refinement of execution, and, above all, presence of two columns of text on the back pillar would have hardly gone undetected by the Danish scholar. This statue, which is now in Bologna, was mentioned for the first time in the sales catalogues of the Nani collection, many years after Giacomo's death.

If getting along with Zoëga stimulated Giacomo Nani to organize and increase his Egyptian collection, at the same time it also gave Angelo Quirini the chance to value and place his antiquities on the market.[47] These two important notables of the Republic had opposite positions both in their political life and in their collecting art. Their enmity was perhaps the main reason why the Quirini Egyptian antiquities were not purchased by Giacomo Nani—or probably not even offered to him—, but it can not be excluded that Zoëga played an important role in this deal.[48] Quirini met the Danish scholar for the first time on the 14th of August—the same day of Giacomo Nani did—and invited him to visit his famous Villa Alticchiero in Padua.[49] Zoëga spent a delightful day there in his company, taking notes on the many sculptures of the garden—mainly on the Egyptian ones—, as well as on other seven small objects located inside the Villa.[50] The number of the garden sculptures—less than he expected—and the high percentage of fakes and vulgar antiquities disappointed him. The only two Egyptian objects he considered of value were a bust of the goddess Sekhmet[51] and a block-statue, entirely decorated and inscribed, but whose state of conservation was unfortunately terrible.[52] Two offering tables, embedded in the block-statue base, and the statue of a scribe with an imaginative canine head, integrated in the upper part, did not obtain

45 NKS 357b fol., II, 2.13 = MCABO EG 1825. See also letter n. 500.

46 MCABO EG 1820.

47 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 28–31, 103–107; Ead., "L'Egitto esibito", 199.

48 Letters nn. 413, 471.

49 Letter n. 400.

50 NKS 357b fol., IV, 1. See also letter n. 403.

51 Its location is unknown up to now.

52 The block-statue is today visible into the garden of Villa Melzi d'Eril in Bellagio (Como).

the same appreciation on the part of Zoëga. For this reason, Zoëga might not have recommended their purchase too warmly, despite Angelo Quirini's repeated insistences and promises of a percentage on the sale in his favour.[53] These three items, which are quite detailed in the drawings published by Madame Justine W. Orsini-Rosenberg in the volume *Alticchiero*, Padua 1787, are now preserved at the Staatliche Museen of Berlin.[54] The only objects he was really interested in—a bronze statuette of Isis examined at Alticchiero, a great heart-scarab, and a lead leaf with inscription preserved at the Venetian palace of Quirini—, were acquired by Cardinal Borgia in February 1790.[55] After Zoëga's opinions on the Quirini Egyptian antiquities were also confirmed by his correspondent Thomas F. Hill, who received their drawings in 1791,[56] the Danish scholar seemed to take no further interest in them. They were considered only to be published in the *De origine et usu obeliscorum* together with the Nani objects and the other less numerous ones, he had examined at the Grimani of Santa Maria Formosa[57] and Pisani house museums,[58] as well as at the house of a Venetian sea captain who had imported a few bales of mummies from Alexandria.[59] Much to his regret, instead, Zoëga was unable to see the Egyptian antiquities kept at the Emo palace in Venice[60] and at the Cataio castle in Padua,[61] where he knew mummies and objects of value were preserved.

With his return to Rome on the 6th of September, Zoëga's direct experience of the Egyptian artefacts preserved in the main antiquarian collections of northern Italy could be considered completed with great satisfaction. He immediately embarked on a new phase of study, again in order to deepen his knowledge of Egyptian civilization, which was began years before and would continue for many more years, even after the publication of the *De origine et*

53 Letters nn. 417, 440–441, 471, 476.

54 Inv. nn. ÄM 2270, 2305, 2291.

55 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 107; Letters nn. 447, 453. See also Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.7 and I.141 (THMA, inv. nn. D1163 and E1422).

56 See in this volume Patricia Usick. A few documents preserved in Copenhagen could be similar to or copies of those sent to Hill. See Bøggild Johannsen, cat. I.34–44 (THMA, inv. nn. D1190–1200, which are related to the manuscript NKSb fol., XIII, 3.4; see frontispiece, iv) and I.85–92 (THMA, inv. nn. E1364–1371), these latter corresponding to the engravings published in J.W. Orsini-Rosenberg, *Alticchiero*, (Padoue, 1787) with handwritten notes; cat. I.45 (THMA, inv. n. D1202) documents an artefact not otherwise known up to now.

57 Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia*, 35, 94–99.

58 Ibid., 36, 108–111. See also letter n. 406.

59 Ibid., 36, 100–102.

60 Letters nn. 411, 434, 436.

61 Letter n. 793.

usu obeliscorum. As he wrote in a letter to Münter in may 1790, in fact, his study of Egypt would be continued further:

> Non desidero niuna cosa tanto quanto di vedere l'Egitto, ma non prima di essermi fornito di tutte le cognizioni di questo paese e delle sue antichità (…). Sono presentemente occupato con registrare quanto dagli antichi e dai principali viaggiatori ho raccolto per rapporto all'Eg[itto] ed alla primitiva Grecia, e fo conto di terminare questo indice verso l'inverno venturo. Allora spoglierò tutti i libri che contengono monumenti, e tutti i viaggiatori dove posso sperare alcuna cosa utile al mio assunto; e poi mi darò alla lettura dei moderni che di tali materie hanno trattato. Dopo ciò è necessario che acquisti delle cognizioni più chiare di fisica, astronomia, storia naturale e tecnologia, di quello sogliono avere gli antiquarj, e che mi renda le lingue Orientali più familiari che ancora non mi sono (…).[62]

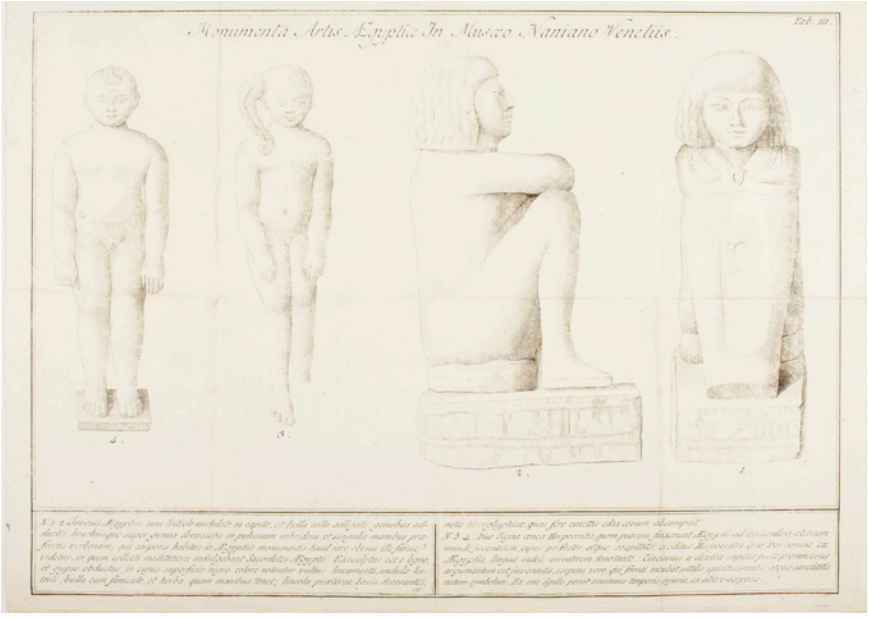

FIGURE 13.1 Monumenta Artis Ægyptiæ in Museo Naniano Venetiis, Tab. III (*THMA, inv. n. E1345, by kind permission of the Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen*).

62 Letter n. 466.

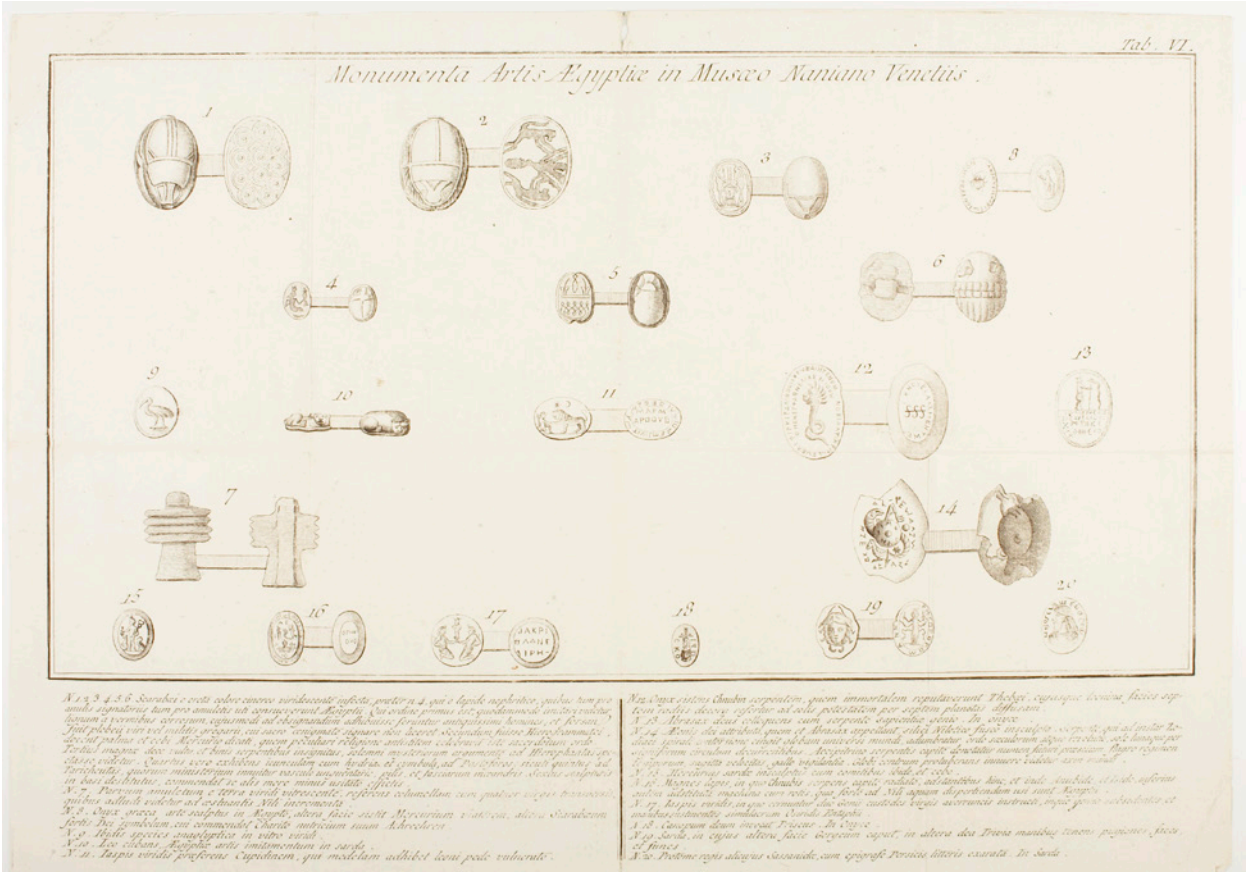

FIGURE 13.2 Monumenta Artis Ægyptiæ in Museo Naniano Venetiis, Tab. VI (*THMA, inv. n. E1351, by kind permission of the Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen*).

CHAPTER 14

Georg Zoëga and the Borgia Collection of Egyptian Antiquities: Cataloguing as a Method

Rosanna Pirelli and Stefania Mainieri[1]

The Borgia Collection of Egyptian Antiquities

Georg Zoëga was the first scholar who studied the Borgia collection of Egyptian antiquities, one of the two main groups of artifacts which constitute the Egyptian section of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN),[2] the other one being a private collection sold by Giuseppe Picchianti in 1827.

After Cardinal Borgia's death, his nephew and heir Camillo tried to sell the Egyptian antiquities to the Danish King,[3] but Pope Pius VII opposed this; Camillo was thus obliged to find a new buyer, and proposed the collection to Joachim Murat, king of Naples, in 1814. Due to the critical political situation, however, the transaction was concluded one year later and the artifacts were not transported to Naples before 1817.

In 1821, Michele Arditi, director of the Real Museo Borbonico established the Egyptian section exhibiting the Borgia antiquities together with few Egyptian artifacts from the Farnese collection and some findings from the Flaegrean and Vesuvian areas: the section was arranged in the eastern wing of the Museum.

When, between 1827 and 1857, Picchianti sold his collection to the Museum and some small private groups of artifacts were also added, changes became

1 The two authors have discussed and agreed on the general content of this paper, where the first paragraph was edited by Rosanna Pirelli and the latter by Stefania Mainieri.

2 C. Barocas, "La storia della Collezione Egiziana del Museo", in *Civiltà dell'Antico Egitto in Campania. Per un riordinamento della Collezione Egiziana del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli*, (Napoli: Tempi Moderni, 1983), 9–15; R. Cantilena, P. Rubino (a cura di), *La collezione egiziana del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli*, (Napoli: Arte Tipografica, 1989); C. Cozzolino, D. d'Errico, R. Di Maria, R. Pirelli, F. Poole, "La storia della Collezione Egiziana del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, in *L'Egitto fuori dell'Egitto. Dalla Riscoperta all' Egittologia*, a cura di C. Morigi Govi, S. Curto, S. Pernigotti, (Bologna: CLUEB, 1991), 341–345; M.R. Borriello, T. Giove, (a cura di), *La Collezione Egiziana del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Guida alle collezioni*, (Napoli: Electa, 2000).

3 According to his words recorded in the volume *Documenti inediti per servire alla storia dei musei d'Italia*, I, (Roma: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1878), xiv.

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necessary and two new expositions were realized: one in 1848 by the Minister of Education, Paolo Emilio Imbriani, and the latter by a new curator, Luigi Vassalli, in 1861.

Finally, in 1864, the section was moved by Giuseppe Fiorelli to the basement of the Museum, where the artifacts were hosted until the end of 2007. During this long period, however, the exposition underwent several changes and was closed for long periods.

In 1983, the exhibition *Civiltà dell'Antico Egitto in Campania* gave birth to a joint project between the Soprintendenza Archeologica per le Province di Napoli e Caserta and the chair of Egyptology of the University of Naples, "l'Orientale": the artifacts, although stored in the same rooms in the basement, had not been displayed for 25 years, and all their museological information had been forgotten. After taking quite a bit of time and effort to reconstruct the history of the various groups of artifacts and to study most of them, the first almost complete catalogue of the Egyptian collection was published[4] and a new exhibition was inaugurated on the 14th December 1989.

As it was the first catalogue of the whole collection, priority was given to the main Egyptological information, and archives were consulted only with the purpose of attributing an inventory number and the original provenance collection of the artifacts. At that time, moreover, we had not yet met the precious archive documents kept in The Royal Library in Copenhagen.[5]

As we mentioned above, in 2007 the collection was closed again (and it is still closed today) as rooms and showcases needed to be refurbished and adapted to new safety criteria. The Soprintendenza Archeologica decided to use this occasion to update the whole catalogue of the collection and to make a new plan for its exposition. The project (which started a few months ago) is again a joint project between the Soprintendenza Archeologica and the University of Naples "l'Orientale", which assigned a regional scholarship for a PhD research on this topic.

Before approaching the main subject of this paper, i.e. the great work of Georg Zoëga on the Egyptian collection, it is appropriate to say a few words on the personality of Cardinal Stefano Borgia.[6]

4 Cantilena, Rubino, *La collezione egiziana*.

5 The authors of this paper express their gratitude to Daniela Picchi for involving them in the project for the study of Zoëga's manuscripts.

6 F. Münter, "Il Cardinale Stefano Borgia", in *Stefano Borgia e i Danesi a Roma*, Centro Internazionale di Studi Borgiani—Quaderni 1, a cura di R. Langella, (Velletri: Edizioni tra 8 & 9, 2000), 63–76.

In fact if Zoëga was among the most rigorous scholars who prepared the bases for the scientific study of Egyptian antiquities, much of what he did must be evaluated also in the light of his relationship with Cardinal Stefano Borgia.[7]

Despite his traditional and rigid education, Borgia developed a peculiar attitude both towards his duties as a senior prelate and towards his scientific interests and social life.

His biographers describe him as a tireless defender of the Church and the Pope, even when (for instance) his difficult relationship with Pius VI caused him great disappointment and frustration; but they also define him as a generous supporter of talented young scholars.

Although his residence in Velletri was conceived as a 'casa-museo',[8] in conformity with a common taste of the eighteenth century, his scientific interests brought him much beyond his current attitude towards the *cabinets de curiositées*. He greatly enlarged his collection, finally dividing it into ten categories of artifacts, and assigned each of them to a specialist, also paying for publication and popularization of their discoveries and scientific results. It was on these bases that Zoëga's work started, allowing him to give his fundamental contribution to the study of Egyptian antiquities.

Cataloguing as a Method

The results of Zoëga's studies on the Borgia Egyptian collection are to be found in the *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani nel Museo Borgiano composto ed ordinato dal Sig. Giorgio Zoega dotto Danese nel mese di Ottobre del 1784*, of which we have two unpublished copies, one at The Royal Library of Copenhagen[9] and the other one at the Municipal Library in Velletri.[10]

The catalogue kept in The Royal Library in Copenhagen[11] is composed of unbound sheets with the detailed description of 628 objects partially sorted

7 K. Ascani, "Georg Zoega, il suo epistolario e il Cardinale Stefano Borgia", in *Stefano Borgia e i Danesi a Roma*, 19–22; Ø. Andreasen, "Il Cardinale Borgia e i Danesi a Roma", in *Stefano Borgia e i Danesi a Roma*, 23–61.

8 S. Cravero, "'Non è da tutti il maneggio delle antichità': la casa-museo di Stefano Borgia dalle sue lettere", in *Le quattro voci del mondo: arte, culture e saperi nella collezione di Stefano Borgia 1731–1804*, a cura di M. Nocca, (Napoli: Electa, 2001), 108–115; Ead:, "L'organizzazione del Museo Borgia a Velletri", in *Stefano Borgia e i Danesi a Roma*, 95–97.

9 NKS 357b fol., III, I.

10 Biblioteca Comunale di Velletri (henceforth BCV), IV, 21.

11 We made a digital copy of it in order to organize the huge amount of information it contains.

in ascending order according to the inventory number. Among the pages some more leaves are inserted with different kinds of notes among which are some notes of Petrini and Thomson about different materials.

Unlike the previous catalogue, the *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani nel Museo Borgiano* is composed of 99 bound pages, numbered and well organised, containing only the descriptions of the objects and, sometimes, their sizes.

Due to their different features, it is likely that the Copenhagen catalogue is the rough copy, while the Velletri catalogue is the final version which is organised in eight parts corresponding to different periods.[12] The objects are in other words the same, although the information of the Copenhagen catalogue is much richer and is accompanied by drawings, copies of the texts and several notes, some of which were added also after 1790. In a letter to Stefano Borgia,[13] Zoëga writes to have been in Velletri again to measure those objects of the collection whose sizes he had not yet recorded in the catalogue, and to correct errors and some inaccurate copies of hieroglyphic texts.[14] All these annotations and a list of measures are in the Copenhagen catalogue and not in the Velletri one.

A third version of the *Catalogo dei monumenti egiziani nel Museo Borgiano* was compiled by Camillo Borgia around 1814 and was then published by the Italian Ministry of Education in *Documenti Inediti per servire alla Storia dei Musei d'Italia* in 1878.[15] It is based on Zoëga's catalogue but it is organised in a different way: the objects here are not sorted on the basis of their inventory number but are gathered on the basis of their material: wood, stone, bronze, faience and so on.

The catalogue includes only 583 objects, that is the artifacts which were sold to the Museum of Naples: 8 of them never arrived in Naples and were deposited in Palazzo Farnese;[16] while 53 more finds, missing from the original catalogue, might have been donated to the Museum of *de Propaganda Fide* in

12 October 1784 (nn. 1–179); February 1785 (nn. 180–192); May 1785 (nn. 193–205); October 1785 (nn. 206–257); May 1787 (nn. 258–273); October 1787 (nn. 274–299), October 1788 (nn. 300–333); May 1790 (nn. 334–628).

13 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga: Briefe und Dokumente*, III, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013), 488–490, letter n. 646 (4 November 1794). We would like to thank Karen Ascani for having made available to us her work, even before its publication.

14 Ibid.

15 "Catalogo dei Monumenti egiziani—Tratto da quello composto dal ch. cav. Giorgio Zoega danese nell'Ottobre del 1784 e seguenti", in *Documenti Inediti*, I–XXIV, 275–427.

16 *Documenti Inediti*, XII.

Rome.[17] Moreover the catalogue of the Egyptian collection,[18] published in 1989, records only 464 objects as belonging to the Borgia collection, that is 111 artifacts less than the list of Camillo.

By comparing the catalogue of Camillo Borgia with the old inventories of the Museum,[19] it was possible to understand that this numerical difference is due to different reasons: the elimination of some rotting organic materials,[20] the transfer of some finds to other collections[21] and the fact that a few objects are still kept in the store-rooms. We are trying to identify all the missing objects, and the high quality of the work done by the Danish scholar more than 200 years ago is a fundamental help for this identification.

One of the basic investigations is to check those items which, in Zoëga's catalogue, were recorded with a single inventory number as belonging to the same assemblage, while, in the inventory of the Museum written in 1884, each object was catalogued as an independent find involving a gradual loss of their original collocation.

An interesting case of this is a damaged mummy with its coffin that, according to Zoëga's words, came from Saqqara via Alexandria and Venice; this mummy arrived in Rome in May 1785 after two years of travelling.[22] Thanks to the information given by Zoëga it was possible to:

1. recompose its decorations, identifying *cartonnage* fragments pertaining to it, assembling them and suggesting their original positions and identifying the missing part;
2. associate the *cartonnage* decoration to its coffin;
3. reconstruct the history of its mummy.

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17 The authors have just contacted the responsible of the *Propaganda Fide* Museum in order to verify this information. We are grateful to Alessia Amenta, curator of Department of Oriental Antiquities of the Vatican Museum who helped us in this phase of the research.

18 Cantilena, Rubino, *La collezione egiziana*.

19 Arditi (1822) Archivio storico della soprintendenza di Napoli (henceforth Assan) Antico Inventario n. 12; Sangiorgio (1849) Assan Antico Inventario n. 85; Fiorelli Inv. gen. (1884). The project also includes the study of those finds not studied in 1989 but that are still kept in the store-rooms.

20 For example two mummies of children with their coffins (Zoëga n. 230—MANN inv. n. 1090 and Zoëga n. 332—MANN inv. n. 1091) were already decaying at the end of 1800.

21 Such as a small leaden board (Zoëga n. 248—Sangiorgio n. 205) transferred in 1849 in the Arabic collection or an handle of sistrum (Zoëga n. 560—MANN inv. n. 2390) moved in the hall of "Bronzi minuti".

22 NKS 357b fol., III, I.

In the Egyptian collection there are currently two anthropoid coffins dated to the Ptolemaic period[23] and 10 fragments of *cartonnage*[24] attributed to the Late Period[25] without any further information. Six of them were already recognised as belonging to the same assemblage,[26] while the others were catalogued apart.

In Zoëga's description, the coffin is a simple brown and undecorated coffin (n. 229),[27] containing a mummy with several colored and gilded pictures and decorations, described as follows:

- a gilded mask (Zoëga n. 252)[28] with a long blue headgear, nine rows of floral and geometric motifs between the frontal bands;
- a double pectoral (Zoëga n. 253): the upper one with falcon heads located on the mummy shoulders and the lower one until the navel;[29]
- from the navel to the knees: a hieroglyphic column (Zoëga n. 254)[30] and seven separate pictures (Zoëga 254 numbered from n. 1 to n. 7).[31] These pictures are described by Zoëga as being found around the mummy and not on the body.[32] But the presence of some holes on their edges led Zoëga to suggest that they were fixed to the body by strings and he also tried to imagine their position on the body, by comparing the composition on another *cartonnage* in the collection (fig. 14.1b);[33]
- from knees to the ankles an apron composed of rows of pendant and floral elements (Zoëga 256)[34] and a foot cover not well described by Zoëga.[35]

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23 Cantilena, Rubino, *La collezione egiziana*, 68: 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, figg. 10.1, 10.2.

24 Mask (MANN inv. n. 1366), apron (MANN inv. n. 1105), collar (MANN inv. n. 1357), inscription (MANN inv. n. 1358), Duamutef (MANN inv. n. 1359), Isis (MANN inv. n. 1360), Nephtys (MANN inv. n. 1361), Isis (MANN inv. n. 1362), Nephtys (MANN inv. n. 1363), Duamutef (MANN inv. n. 1364), Amset (MANN inv. n. 1365).

25 Cantilena, Rubino, *La collezione egiziana*, 90–91: 9.94, 9.95, 9.96, 9.97, 9.98, 9.99, 9.100, 9.101, 9.102, 9.103, 9.104.

26 Mask (MANN inv. n. 1366), inscription (MANN inv. n. 1358), Duamutef (MANN inv. n. 1359), Isis (MANN inv. n. 1360), Nephtys (MANN inv. n. 1361); Ibid., 90.

27 Ibid., 68: 7.1–7.2, fig. 10.2.

28 MANN inv. n. 1366.

29 MANN inv. n. 1357.

30 MANN inv. n. 1358; this inscription is described as a long whole strip, but now it is split into two parts.

31 Duamutef (MANN inv. n. 1359), Isis (MANN inv. n. 1360), Nephtys (MANN inv. n. 1361), Isis (MANN inv. n. 1362), Nephtys (MANN inv. n. 1363), Duamutef (MANN inv. n. 1364)

32 NKS 357b fol III, I.

33 MANN inv. 1092 (Zoëga n. 164). Cantilena, Rubino, *La collezione egiziana*, 91–92: 9.105

34 MANN inv. n. 1105.

35 This footcover has been identified with Naples inv. n. 1106 but it has not yet been found, maybe it is one of the rotting organic materials.

Zoëga's description let us suppose that part of the *cartonnage* elements[36] and the female coffin corresponding to MANN inv. 2342–2346 (fig. 14.2b) are to be considered as belonging to the same assemblage, which can be attributed to the Ptolemaic period. Comparisons can be made either with items from Saqqara,[37] or from Akhmim.[38]

Some doubts have to be expressed, however, on Zoëga's reconstruction (fig. 14.1a and 14.2a), based on three considerations: first of all style, colors, and dimensions of the decorations suggest that they may belong to two different assemblages,[39] secondly it would be difficult to justify the contemporary presence of two *wsḫ*-colliers;[40] finally the central position on the navel (that according to Zoëga was occupied by one of the four sons of Horus) usually was reserved for the god Osiris.

About the mummy, Zoëga wrote that it was donated in 1789 by Borgia to the Museum of Collegio Nazareno in Rome,[41] thus the coffin came to Naples empty.[42] But currently it includes a female mummy wrapped in strips of cloth opened on the face and on the chest. According to some documents of the Archivio di Stato in Naples, this body comes from the pharmacy of the Monastery of

36 Mask, collar, inscription, Duamutef, Isis and Nephtys.

37 R. Cortopassi, S. Pagès-Campagna, *Les cartonnages du puits F17 de Saqqâra,* *BIFAO* 108 (2008), 45–68; J.H. Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, (London: The British Museum Press, 2001).

38 A. Schweitzer, "L'évolution stylistique et iconographique des parures de cartonnage d'Akhmim du début de l'epoque ptolémaïque à l'époque romaine", *BIFAO* 98 (1998), 325–352; a similar mummy from a private collection (Stevens) is also kept in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN inv. n. 114.313; fig. 3) and is recorded as coming from Akhmim, MANN. Cantilena, Rubino, *La collezione egiziana*, 185–186: 23.1, 23.2, 23.3, fig. 24.2.

39 Zoëga himself notes this, and it is confirmed by the custom in 1700–1800 to collect different finds belonging to different origins in order to increase the importance of the good to sell or donate. An example of this is the coffin of the Egyptian Museum in Florence inv. nn. 2158, 2154–2155, 2156–2157. P.R. Del Francia, "Le mummie del Museo egizio di Firenze e i loro contenitori lignei", in *Le Mummie del Museo egizio di Firenze*, a cura di M.C. Guidotti, (Firenze: Giunti, 2001), 6–9.

40 Mummy of Djed-Hapi Penn Museum E 3413, Third Intermediate Period, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Hermitage Museum Inv. n. 18421b, see A.O. Bolshakov, "Unusual Late Period cartonnage mummy case in the Hermitage Museum", *BSEG* 16 (1992), 5–18.

41 NKS 357b fol., III, I. This gift is quoted in G. Petrini, *Gabinetto Mineralogico del Collegio Nazareno descritto secondo i caratteri esterni e distribuito a norma de' principj costitutivi*, I, (Roma: presso i Lazzarini, 1791–1792), 347–348, CLXI c.v. 1, 16–23.

42 Archivio di Stato Napoli (henceforth ASN), Min. Int. II, cont. 1973, un. 277.

S. Francesco di Paola.[43] When the latter was closed, the mummy was moved to the Real Museo Mineralogico[44] and then, between 1821 and 1823, to the Real Museo Borbonico[45] with other human remains coming from the Farmacia SS. dell'Annunziata.[46] The research is still ongoing in the archives of SS. Annunziata and Museo Mineralogico and in the Archive of Monasteri Soppressi to identify S. Francesco di Paola's mummies and reconstruct their story.

These are only some preliminary results of a research in progress, but Zoëga's work is giving us interesting information to fill the gaps present in the Museum documents about the Borgia collection and it will help to propose new exposition criteria for the Egyptian collection in Naples.

FIGURE 14.1 *a: Zoëga's reconstruction of* cartonnage *n. 254: on the top (from left to right), Nephtys* (MANN *inv. n. 1361*), *Duamutef* (MANN *inv. n. 1359*) *and Isis* (MANN *inv. n. 1360*); *on the left hand of hieroglyphic inscription* (MANN *inv. n. 1358*), *Duamutef* (MANN *inv. n. 1364*) *and Isis* (MANN *inv. n. 1362*); *on the right hand Nephtys* (MANN *inv. n. 1363*). *b:* MANN *inv. n. 1092 used by Zoëga to organize the position of the* cartonnage *elements.*

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Assan IV B 10,1.

46 Ibid.; ASN, Min. Int. II, cont. 1973, un. 277. Considerable quantities of Egyptian mummies were imported to Europe during Renaissance and could be found in the shops of apothecaries as a drug for prescriptions. About the use of Egyptian mummies in medical science: K.H. Dannenfeldt, "Egyptian *Mumia*: The Sixteenth Century Experience and Debate", *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16.2 (1985), 163–180; S. Marinozzi, G. Fornaciari, *Le mummie e l'arte medica nell'evo moderno*, (Roma: Università "La Sapienza", 2005).

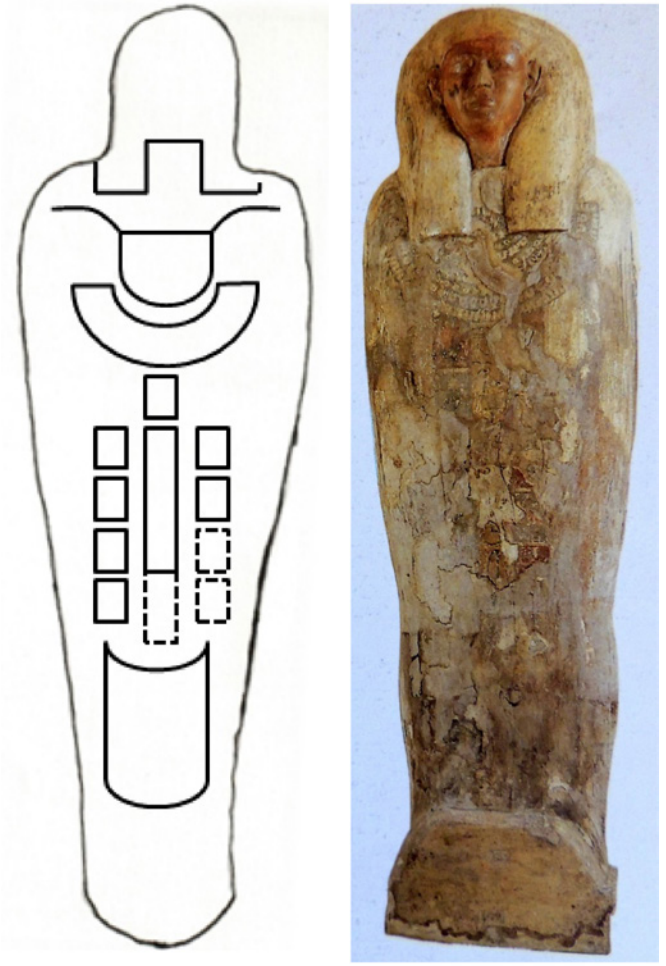

FIGURE 14.2 *a: Zoëga's reconstruction of the position of the whole* cartonnage *decoration. b: the Ptolemaic coffin* MANN *inv. nn. 2342–2346.*

FIGURE 14.3 Cartonnage *from Akhmim,* XXVI *dynasty, Stevens collection,* MANN *inv. n. 114.313.*

CHAPTER 15

A Concealed Attempt at Deciphering Hieroglyphs

Paul John Frandsen

Zoëga's Passion for Ancient Egypt

Studies on material related to ancient Egypt take a dominant position among Zoëga's published oeuvre. But contrary to the prevailing opinion,[1] Egypt was in fact so close to the heart of this great scholar, as even a superficial reading of his many letters reveals,[2] that words such as passion, occasionally even obsession, seem more apt characterizations of his relationship with that great civilization.[3] Egypt was a challenge, to use a modern phrase, not merely because its archaeological remains and conspicuous presence in ancient literature epitomized a great past, but above all because, according to Zoëga, deeper insight and understanding of the ancient Greek and Roman civilization required a solid knowledge of its roots in the world of the Egyptians.[4] To this end, the ancient language was the only real key, and Zoëga had no doubts that a proper ability to read Egyptian texts was a prerequisite for a true and comprehensive knowledge of ancient Egypt.

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* I thank Lana Troy for correcting my English text. Zoëga's correspondence is cited after Ø. Andreasen (hrsg.), *Georg Zoega. Briefe und Dokumente*, I, (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967); Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013). Unless otherwise indicated the letters of Zoëga translated into English were written in Danish. The translations have been made by the author.

1 See e.g. J.S. Jensen, *s.v.* "Georg Zoëga", in *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, www.denstoredanske/Dansk_Biografisk_Leksikon.

2 See e.g. letters n. 534 of 29 October 1791 to the historian P.F. Suhm (1728–1798); n. 171 of 14 May 1782 to C.G Heyne; n. 175 of 5 June 1785 to the historian A. Kall (1743–1821). See further below.

3 In the early letter from 1784 to his close friend C.H. Esmarch (1752–1820) he presents the outline of a grand project he has been working on for some time. It aims at dispersing some of the darkness that has clouded ancient Egypt since the time of Moses, but it has proved, he admits, too ambitious and immature. He has decided, therefore, to take up Coptic, and "once I have learned Coptic, I shall resume work on the Geography of Egypt, and then on the oldest history and religion of Egypt" (letter n. 202 of 22 March 1784).

4 See e.g. the abovementioned letter n. 534 of 29 October 1791 to Suhm.

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Zoëga's predilection for Egypt once again thwarted his father's ambition on his behalf. The latter had been very disappointed with his son's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith and had rebuked him for what he regarded as a shallow—but read Enlightenment—view of God and society.[5] In a letter to his brother, Zoëga's uncle, he refers to his son's research as a concern with crocodiles and mummies, and also expresses the hope that eventually he could make his son return to his, the father's, world.[6] Also Ove Høegh-Guldberg, who a few years earlier, during his tenure as Danish 'prime minister', had used his political power to mastermind a career plan for Zoëga, was greatly disappointed when he learned that Zoëga had upset all his own plans out of love for a woman—not to mention those of Høegh-Guldberg. Yet in a letter to Friedrich Münter, the lifelong friend of Zoëga and a man who was to become an important and influential member of the Danish elite, Guldberg also wrote:

> Would that his aspiration to penetrate and master the hieroglyphs would succeed, if only partially! What a discovery, and what a source for discoveries. I take it that you will share with me what you may learn about this.[7]

Thus, on the authority of Guldberg's letter we may deduce that as of December 1787 it was known by some—and now for us as well—that Zoëga's true ambition was to decipher hieroglyphs.

The Pope's Commission

Luckily the opportunity to embark on his 'secret' project was soon to materialize. Pope Pius VI had decided to re-erect three obelisks in Rome and this provided the occasion to find out more about the purpose and origin of these spectacular monuments. The Pope's choice of author fell upon Zoëga, whose first book had come out in the very same year 1787 and had been well received. The subject matter of the book was the coins from imperial Alexandria[8] and Zoëga was therefore invited to write a volume on the obelisks. We know from his correspondence that Zoëga was often harassed by financial difficulties,

5 Especially the letters n. 261 of 5 July 1785 and n. 268 of 8 November 1785.

6 Letter n. 288 of 14 April 1786.

7 Letter n. 336 of 18 December 1787.

8 G. Zoëga, *Numi Aegyptii imperatorii prostantes in Museo Borgiano Velitris adiectis praeterea quotquot reliqua huius classis numismata ex variis museis atqve libris colligere obtigit*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1787).

and that, in itself, might well have motivated him to accept the Pope's offer. The possibility, however, to devote himself full time to *materia aegyptiaca* was probably a godsend, and we should therefore be wary of accepting the reserved attitude provided by a *prima facie* reading when in a letter to Münter he writes that he does not know whether to "consider this as a boon or a disaster".[9]

In fact, the offer from Pius VI was a most welcome gift. Work on erecting the obelisks made slow progress and this gave Zoëga the time to do the job in the way he intended. Above all it gave him the unique opportunity to have accurate copies of the inscriptions made. Zoëga was a most meticulous and thorough scholar who never published anything without mastering the evidence and the scholarly literature. He therefore intended to put together everything that had ever been said about the obelisks, and still more he wished to contextualize them:

> I am not learned enough to say things in the manner in which I believe that they should be said. Moreover, I cannot undertake any other kind of work until I have fulfilled the intentions of the Pope. The extraordinary kindness he has shown in soliciting this work from me obliges me to devote all my efforts to living up to his expectations. He has ordered that traces be made for me of the 'figures' on the obelisks and that accurate copies be made under my supervision. I shall, however, not commence work until the summer next year. I need this whole year to prepare myself. For the moment I am doing this by way of writing a commentary on Homer. Next one on Orpheus by Hesiod. I do not think that others who have written about obelisks and hieroglyphs have proceeded in this manner. Scandinavian mythology shall be included in this project, and I would therefore appreciate having access to [*scil.* Snorri] Sturlason's Edda, which is not available in the libraries here. If you can get a copy, send it to me, whatever the costs.[10]

However, the study of the obelisks grew and deepened so that when the book was finally published 12 years later, it comprised 651 folio pages of text in Latin. This huge volume presented to the reader all that was known at the time about ancient Egypt, or, to be more accurate, a little less than Zoëga knew that he knew. The truth is that he kept some information to himself. Not everything was published. About one third of the book, 226 pages, is devoted to a large chapter on hieroglyphs. In a letter sent to the German art historian Aloys Hirt

9 Letter n. 347 of 17 May 1788.

10 Letter n. 353 to Münter, written between 7 June and 2 August 1788.

(1759–1839) shortly after the work had been published in the autumn of 1800, Zoëga gave a short précis of the content of that chapter:

> Das 2 Capitel: Litterarum apud Aegyptios usus et origo: giebt zuerst alle Nachrichten der Alten über die Egyptische Schriftarten, handelt sodann von der Natur, dem Gebrauch, der Anzahl der Hieroglyfen, und ihren Schiksalen in den verschiednen Zeitaltern, wobey eine grosse Anzahl Egyptische Monumente angeführt und erläutert wird. Ferner von dem gedoppelten Alfabete der Egypter, dem Gebrauch derselben, ihren heiligen und andern uns bekant gewordnen Büchern. Endlich von dem Ursprunge der verschiednen Schriftarten so wol bey den Egyptern als den übrigen uns bekanten Völkern, und von der Entstehung der Alfabete aus den Hieroglyfen.[11]

A great amount of work had been put into this chapter, but despite its enormous size, not one word reveals that Zoëga knew a lot more about hieroglyphs than what could be found in the book.

Zoëga's Approach

By the end of the seventeenth century many of the ideas about hieroglyphs which had been prominent in earlier centuries had begun to give way to more rational ways of addressing the problem.[12] The comparative approach seems to have enjoyed a certain appeal, as appears from the abovementioned chapter on hieroglyphs. In a letter to the Crown Prince, the future king Frederik VI, who for a period of four years, beginning in 1788, had hired Zoëga as his 'scientific aid' for the purpose of being kept informed about the state of the study of Antiquity, Zoëga called attention to one such attempt:

> Taking a Samaritan coin in the collection of [the later cardinal] Borgia as his starting point, the learned Dominican Fabricy is in the process of writing a study of the Phoenician, Samaritan and other languages and alphabets related to these, and it is said that also a discussion of the Scandinavian Runes and their origin will be included.[13]

11 Letter n. 851 of 28 November 1800.

12 See e.g. E. Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*, (Copenhagen: Gad, 1961).

13 Letter n. 354 of 9 August 1788 (original in German).

In the rich material preserved at The Royal Library in Copenhagen, there is clear evidence that Zoëga at various points made use of a similar approach. Here we find e.g. a comparative palaeography of 11 'alphabets': Phoenician as attested in different versions and from different localities, such as Malta, Sicily, etc. Zoëga even went so far as to toy with the idea of working out stemmas for the development of individual signs.[14]

It is not easy to establish a chronological line among the papers at The Royal Library. In the pages devoted to the study of hieroglyphs proper a certain progression in the understanding of the material can be detected, and it is therefore possible to work out some sort of internal chronology. It is, however, impossible to decide whether his different attempts at cracking the code are concurrent with, or earlier or later than, his work on hieroglyphs. Thus he tried to use his knowledge of Coptic as a means of understanding the individual signs. In his work on the hieratic script there is even evidence that he was inspired by a syllabic writing system like the Ethiopian.

Zoëga's Tools—Number and Sign-Lists

By way of introduction to what follows I should make it clear that Zoëga left no account of his 'method'. He obviously knew what he was doing, and had no need to explain his approach. In the material preserved at The Royal Library two types of 'tools' are conspicuous: lists of hieroglyphs organized in sign-lists, and copies of a limited number of monuments with numbers replacing hieroglyphs. The two 'tools' were intertwined and therefore developed simultaneously, but lacking the possibility to use illustrations, I shall try to describe them separately.

We begin with the sign-lists. A list of hieroglyphs is an indispensable tool for anyone trying to master a large body of signs, and when Zoëga started working on the first inscriptions attested in the material, he must have begun to jot down the hieroglyphs he encountered rather quickly. It appears that he concentrated on the material from two monuments: the inscriptions on the Lateran obelisk and those on the curious and unique monument Napoli 1069.[15]

14 See NKS 357b fol., II, 1, 2.

15 The monument is published in R. Cantilena, P. Rubino, *La Collezione egiziana del Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli*, (Napoli: Arte Tipografica, 1989), 35–37, [2] fig. 3.1. It has been studied by M. Trapani, "The monument of Imeneminet (Naples, Inv. 1069): an essay of interpretation", in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 82, edited by C.J. Eyre,

The sign-lists can be divided into four types. (1) Sign-lists where some signs appear in hieroglyphics with a number while others occur as numbers only (fig. 15.1). (2) Sign-lists where the signs and their corresponding numbers are divided according to whether they are individual signs or groups of signs (fig. 15.2). (3) Sign-lists where the emphasis is placed on descriptions—in Latin—of what the individual sign represents, and, (4) sign-lists where the organizing principle is Zoëga's classification of the signs. I believe that this numerical order also reflects the internal chronology of the sign-lists.

Sign-List n. 1

We begin with the simplest sign-list—let us call it n. 1. This list is made up of 11 paper sheets full of hieroglyphs and numbers, everything organized with a view to making a list of signs. Sign n. 1 is , sign n. 2 is , but n. 3 is the group , which is made up of signs that occur as separate numbers in the list, as sign n. 29 and as n. 3. A closer look at the table indicates that Zoëga was well aware of the Egyptian practice of group writing. Thus among the higher numbers of the list, only a few are shown with their hieroglyphic signs written out. The page listing signs 297 thru 329 consists, with two exceptions, of nothing but numbers, each of them made up of two or more hieroglyphs. Thus: 297 = 95, 134 and 61; 298 = 8, 153, with 153 being made up of sign nn. 154 + 155.

Judging from the presentation of the hieroglyphs on the list, one may assume that it is an early sign-list, because Zoëga had not yet assigned separate number systems to individual signs and groups of signs. Moreover, the organization of the signs seems somewhat experimental, and disorganized; initially it may have been derived from his work on the Naples monument. Yet the list also demonstrates how Zoëga gradually came to understand that there were groups of signs that he termed 'systems' and single signs, termed 'figures' in his own and later terminology.

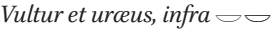
(Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 1165–1176; R. Pirelli, "The monument of Imeneminet (Naples, Inv. 1069) as a document of social changes in the Egyptian New Kingdom", in Ibid., 871–884. Text conveniently in K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions*, III, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 272. Also in M.I. Moursi, *Die Hohenpriester des Sonnengottes von der Frühzeit bis zum Ende des Neuen Reichs*, Münchener Ägyptologische Studien 26, (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972), 61–63, pls. VII–VIII. The inscriptions on the Lateran obelisk are conveniently available in K. Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, IV, (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906), 583–585 and W. Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, IV, (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 1548–1552.

Other Sign-Lists

A closer look at the many papers reveals that Zoëga devoted a considerable amount of time trying to systematize his observations. The material is overwhelming and it is not always possible to discern the links between the many sign-lists. Having no computer at his disposal, new insight forced him to produce new lists of signs, and this, in turn, necessitated the construction of concordances. The hieroglyphic basis for the more advanced sign-lists seems to have been his work on the obelisks. For unknown reasons Zoëga seems to have chosen the inscription on the Lateran obelisk as the starting point for a new series of lists. He made several copies of the texts, but the most interesting ones are those where he combines hieroglyphs with numbers. The numbers correspond to those found in at least three more or less identical lists of which one explicitly states that the hieroglyphs are taken from the obelisk.

The most important list is the one with a heading *Explicatio numerorum in delineationibus*, which thus promises to provide us with the key to the system. The list offers two types of information. In the first place it is divided into two rough columns. Both are made up of a combination of hieroglyphs and numbers. The left column is headed by the word *figura* inscribed inside a circle. The heading is followed by a list of single signs. These may be represented in two out of three different ways. Each 'sign' has a number inscribed in a circle. Thus the first 'sign' in the list carries n. 1 inside a circle; the sign itself is omitted and replaced with its description *accipiter stans* (a standing hawk). In short, single signs, whether listed by their description or as hieroglyphs, all have a number of their own, and this number is always inscribed in a circle.

The column to the right is preceded by the word *systema* inscribed inside a square. *Systema* is Zoëga's designation for group writings. All numbers belonging to this type of notation are inscribed inside a square. The beginning of the list is as follows:

	Sign-list	Modern transliteration	Reconstruction/ Interpretation
1	[*h*]*arundo et apis* +	*nsw-bit*	
2	*cum vasentis tribus*	*mnw*	
3		*ỉpt-swt*	
4	*Vultur et urœus, infra* 		

This graphic device—boxes or squares vs. circles—is found in all other lists, e.g. his lists culled from the Lateran obelisk, and the same procedure is used in many copies of inscriptions.

The column to the right is further preceded by two remarks of some importance. The first shows that Zoëga had come to realize that hieroglyphs can be written in several directions: *NB. Intelligo de iis hieroglyphicorum columnis ubi figurae conversae sunt dextrorsum* (*scil.* to the right side).[16] *in iis enim ubi sinistrorsum, omnia eveniunt in contrarium*, e.g. . This observation is found almost *verbatim* on another page from a different version of the list, which moreover claims to be a list of *catalogus tutius*!!

The second remark says that for the cartouches one should consult nn. 1–21 in the old catalogue in large folio (*NB. Schemata elliptica vide in Catalogo Veteri folio majori N. 1–21*). The reference to this part of the old catalogue, as well as the remark about the *schemata*, is easy to understand. It can only refer to a list on two large folio sheets. In this list the signs are listed by descriptions in Latin, sometimes accompanied by the hieroglyph itself. The first folio sheet contains 137 descriptions of hieroglyphs listed without any apparent order. It carries the heading *notae*. Nn. 136–198 are listed on the other sheet, and on the reverse of that we find a kind of analysis of the groups labelled *schemata*. This study is preceded by a heading *systemata* as well as a note that *N. omnia dextrorsum*, i.e., all hieroglyphs are facing left. These notes are then followed by three lists. Here Zoëga has taken another step forward in that he subdivides the *systema*, or group writing. The first subdivision is, *a. in auleo* with copies of four boxes with Horus names. The second list, *b. ellipsi* has copies of 21 cartouches, while the third, *c. in area* lists 53 groups of signs. E.g.

***Systemata in ellipsi*, i.e. cartouches**	**N. combination**	**Hieroglyphic version**	**Modern transliteration**	**Name of king as known today**
2	4-27-136-3		*mn-ḫprw-rʿ*	Tuthmosis IV
9	10-146-123-10-61-3		*ḏhwty-ms ḥʿḥʿw*	Tuthmosis IV

16 All Egyptologists would describe hieroglyphs as facing right when you write , and left when you write . However, when facing left, the scribe writes from left to right, and therefore *dextrorsum* corresponds to facing left, while *sinistrorsum* means facing right. Are we confused?

The last type of list that I shall mention is also the most interesting. Like the modern Egyptologist, Zoëga thought it fit to organize the signs in thematic groups. Zoëga made several such lists. The most comprehensive has 197 signs and is divided into 13 groups. Each entry in the list may consist of four types of information: a number, a description in Latin, a number in brackets and a hieroglyph. The numbers in brackets refer to the much more elaborate description of the signs in the abovementioned list headed *notae*. Sometimes the hieroglyph as such is only found in the latter list:

1. *Mathematica*
2. *Architectonica*
3. *Vasa*
4. *Rustica*
5. *Utensilia varia*
6. *Bellica*
7. *Musica*
8. *Vestes*
9. *Animantia*
10. *Partes corporis humanae*
11. *Figurae humanae mumiacae*
12. *Figurae humanae*
13. *Symplegmata* [An intertwined formation, in sculpture applied to e.g. wrestlers, erotic contexts]

The categories into which the signs have been classified differ somewhat from the modern categories, but there are of course also several points of similarity, especially when the signs represent an object whose identity or genus is beyond dispute, such as human beings and animals.

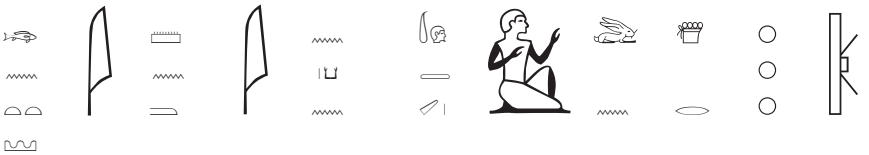
The Numbering System

Zoëga developed his numbering system as a means to organize and control the multitude of hieroglyphs, his research into the meaning of the individual signs as well as the composition of groups of signs. From the many copies of the inscriptions on the Lateran obelisk and, above all, on Napoli 1069, a monument which commemorates more than twenty people, one gets the impression that he also used the numbers as a sort of shorthand. In his papers there is a large number of copies of the latter monument. Some of these are exquisite copies of the monuments as a whole, while copies of bits of texts are found on

separate pages. There is also a large sheet of paper on which the hieroglyphs of the entire monument are rendered as numbers.

And then there is a number of intermediate copies. On a series of blue sheets of paper we find copies of which the following specimen may serve as the prototype:

As it happens, this text is also copied *in extenso* on a white sheet, and thus we are able to see what the numbers actually mean:



These sheets are of the utmost importance, because they reveal the system that Zoëga devised in order either to better understand what he was investigating or simply to save time. The fact that he tried to reduce the Napoli monument to numbers just might be taken as an indication that the numbers in themselves were used as a means to 'decipher' the hieroglyphs. Zoëga may have entertained the idea that it is easier to detect patterns in a mass of numbers than in a mass of partially incomprehensible signs, and one only has to compare his number-copy of the Napoli monument with the descriptive sign-by-sign copy of a *pastophore* made by his British friend and gentleman-researcher, Thomas Ford Hill to see the great advantage of Zoëga's method.[17]

Once Zoëga's code has been cracked it is possible, by means of the various sign-lists, to reconstruct the inscriptions that were copied by means of numbers but otherwise left unidentified. In several cases the reconstructions can be tested, because the folders contain copies of the same inscriptions with 'real' hieroglyphs. Zoëga's own system may therefore be said to have been deciphered.

17 E.g. letter n. 1272, no date [1790–1795], see Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, V, 427–437!

The Meaning of the Sign

The thematic lists are likely to represent the final stage of Zoëga's research into the nature of hieroglyphs. The criteria by which a given sign was assigned to one of these groups is fairly obvious: resemblance and Coptic. If a sign looked like a human being or a bird it would be assigned to these groups. However, several signs are more difficult to identify, and here Zoëga had recourse to his knowledge of Coptic. Thus, the circle is correctly identified as 'Re' the sun, RH.

When possible, Zoëga made a clear distinction between what in modern terminology is called *signifiant* "signifier" and *signifié* "signified". In the *notae*-list, for instance, the sign ⊗, which to a modern Egyptologist is the city sign, is described as *circulus quadripartitus*. But when it comes to meaning, it is rendered as *totum, universum*—a verdict that demonstrates that Zoëga did not suspect that hieroglyphs were anything but allegorical signs.

This goes for other representations as well. Thus in a letter to Münter he makes an interesting comment on the nature of two representations, the scarab and Isis, found on a sarcophagus purchased by Münter:

> Voi domandate che cosa possa significare Iside collo Scarabeo. la risposta sarebbe facile, ma varia secondo le circostanze. lo Scarabeo come sapete è un simbolo del primo motore, del demiurgo o della deità fecondante, poi del sole, del calore *pp*. Iside lo è della natura madre, del mondo, del principio fecondato, della terra, della luce *pp*. in una parola lo Scarabeo significa il principio attivo, Iside il principio passivo. ma il senso individuale della loro combinazione in un dato luogo dipende come gia dissi dalla positura relativa e da tutte le circostanze che gli accompagnano.[18]

This passage shows that representations and hieroglyphs are looked upon as symbols or allegorical signs with meanings at different levels of abstraction. Thus the scarab and Isis are said to represent several things, and for anyone familiar with *materia aegyptiaca* it is easy to find elements of truth in what Zoëga says. But then at a higher level of classification and meaning, the scarab and Isis are seen as representatives of the very basic and highly abstract categories of the Active and the Passive! Depending on their context they can even interact.

In another letter, a report to the Danish Crown Prince, in which he describes the contents of a number of collections in northern Italy, he says that in the collection of the Senator Quirini in Alticchiero

18 Letter n. 371 of 10 January 1789.

> Eine colossalische weibliche Figur von schwarzem Granit mit Löwenkopfe, sizend mit dem Nilschlüssel in der Hand, ist völlig einer andern gleich die ich vor einigen Jahren zu Turin gesehn. Eine kleinere findet sich in Villa Borghese, und überhaupt ist dieses Sinnbild bey den Egyptern häufig, die durch dasselbe die vom Nil bewirkte Fruchtbarkeit ihres Landes ausdrükten. Denn daß der Löwe ein Hieroglyph des Nils ist, leidet keinen Zweifel.[19]

Conclusion

It is not clear at which point finally Zoëga gave up. He had known right from the beginning that the task he had set himself was an almost hopeless one.[20] His former teachers, the classical scholar Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) and Joseph Eckhel (1737–1798), learned Jesuit and numismatist, had admonished him not to embark on the project.[21] That did not deter Zoëga, who almost attributed his ardent desire to crack the code to some sort of fate or divine mission, as he wrote five months later in reply to Eckhel's reservations:

> Aber man hat mich nun einmal in die Egyptischen Finsternisse hineingestossen, da irre denn jeder Dämmerung nach. Was am Ende dabey herausgekommen mag, weis ich nicht, erwarte wenig.[22]

One and a half year later, however, another letter from Eckhel seems to indicate that Zoëga had given up trying to understand hieroglyphs:

> Sie schreiben also ein Werk über die Obelisken. Der Gegenstand ist mir überaus willkommen, u. noch mehr, daß sie sich nebenbey alle Erklärungen der Hieroglyphen verboten haben. Mit Vergnügen bemerke ich bey dieser ihrer Kapitulation, daß sie, verdienstvoller Mann, von ihrer vorigen Lieblingsidee, Berge eben zu machen, zurückgekommen sind.[23]

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19 Letter n. 432 of 25 November 1789.

20 See e.g. his letter to the Crown Prince, n. 359 of 26 September 1788.

21 See Heyne's long and exceptionally interesting letter n. 488 of 22 September 1790.

22 Letter n. 506 of 22 February 1791.

23 Letter n. 575 of 8 August 1792. The letter continues with an ominous quotation [from Horace, *Odes*, 1.3] to the effect that stealing the fire from the ethereal mansions would have dire consequences (*Audax Japeti genus—Post ignem ætherea domo subductum macies et nova febrium, terris incubuit cohors*).

When many years later Zoëga became acquainted with the discovery of the Rosetta Stone he immediately realized the potential of that inscription. In a letter to Münter he toyed with the idea of resuming his hieroglyphic studies. The stone would likely be the key to the proper understanding of hieratic as well as hieroglyphs:

> The Egyptian column mentioned in your letter is extremely interesting. I would treasure an exact copy of it, but in the present circumstances I know of no means to procure it, unless you would be able to do so. I might then fancy to renew the desire, virtually relinquished, for ancient Egypt. When you write that a copy of it has arrived, I take it that you mean a plaster cast. Sometime ago it was reported here that the monument had been transported to Paris, and that it was dated to the reign of Ptolemy XII Auletes. It could be the key to the so-called hieratic script as well as to the hieroglyphs.[24]

24 Letter n. 853 of 11 December 1800. The former keeper of the Royal Cast Collection at The National Gallery of Denmark, Jan Zahle, has kindly informed me that no cast of the Rosetta Stone reached the collection before the end of the twentieth century (Inv. N. 2283)! Münter is more likely to have made a reference to prints of the stone that were produced in Paris during the autumn of 1800, long before the stone was surrendered to the English, see R. Parkinson, *Cracking Codes. The Rosetta Stone and the Decipherment*, (Berkeley – Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1999), 20.

FIGURE 15.1 *Monument of Imeneminet (Naples), copy of a hieroglyphic text with numbers attached to the majority of signs.*

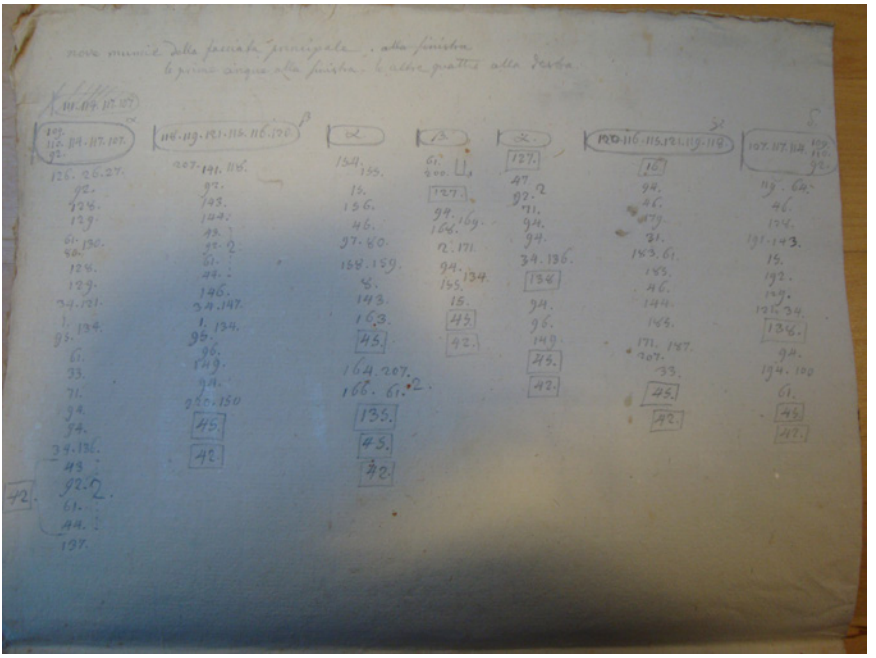

FIGURE 15.2 *Monument of Imeneminet (Naples), copy of several columns of text, all signs being replaced by numbers, group of signs being the numbers inscribed inside a square.*

CHAPTER 16

"Covered with the Rust of Egyptian Antiquity": Thomas Ford Hill and the Decipherment of Hieroglyphs

Patricia Usick

This research was undertaken as a result of an inquiry for information about Thomas Ford Hill (1753–1795), an Englishman who had corresponded with Georg Zoëga (1755–1809) about the possible decipherment of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and whose letters included drawings of some of the earliest inscribed Egyptian antiquities to arrive in the British Museum. Their correspondence probably started in 1787, following their meeting, and only ended with Hill's death in 1795.

Academic, affectionate, and discursive, the letters reveal the intellectual and personal relationship between the two men and the subjects and direction of their research, while being a unique record of the reception of some of the earliest Egyptian antiquities in the British Museum, and others arriving in London. The eighteenth-century collection of Sir Hans Sloane, the foundation of the British Museum in 1753, contained only 160 small Egyptian antiquities. These were then augmented by two mummies and coffins from the Lethieullier family, and a few larger inscribed stone pieces sent from Egypt by Edward Wortley Montagu. The latter, the inscribed architectural slabs of Nectanebo I (EA 22) and Psamtek I (EA 20) and a relief depicting the ritual slaying and dismemberment of four oxen (EA 430) were all drawn by Hill for Zoëga (fig. 16.1–2). The arrival of these antiquities, together with travellers' accounts, had stimulated interest in ancient Egypt. The two slabs stood on the top of the steps going into the great hall of Montagu House, the first home of the British Museum. Hill made carefully annotated drawings of the Egyptian pieces which he had closely examined in the British Museum and elsewhere, including EA 430, which "has never been published, and perhaps not even drawn, until I made the above drawing". He also took rubbings to ensure the accuracy of the inscriptions, examined details with a torch, and checked the handling of the chisel-marks. Detailed descriptions and measurements are followed by his hypotheses on the iconography, date, and possible context of the pieces. He also highlighted individual hieroglyphs, which seemed to him to be of particular importance or rarity, or which he deemed easily identifiable,

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suggesting that the signs portrayed objects from Egyptian life, but also inferring symbolic meanings.

Hill also drew the naophorous statue of Wahibre, EA 111, which did not arrive in the British Museum until 1844 when it was purchased from Fletcher's Warehouse. Its owner had gone back to Egypt and perhaps never returned. Further unknown drawings of three small 'pastophori' (naophorous statuettes) in black basalt were also made for Cardinal Stefano Borgia. The Wanstead *pyramidion* (now lost) was closely examined and the Alexander Gordon prints of it corrected.

Hill always humbly deferred to Zoëga's superior scholarship. He cites exhaustive references from the Classical authors to support his own, sometimes differing, views, but also refers to the very latest reportage available (albeit reflecting the scepticism which characterised its reception), that of James Bruce's *Travels to discover the Source of the Nile*, published in 1790, a copy of which was sent off to Zoëga. They were particularly aware of the value of personal observation in travellers' accounts, and Hill's later letters summarise, translate, and evaluate various books to which Zoëga had no other access. In addition to questions of decipherment there are extremely lengthy passages on subjects such as the nature of the cobra and viper portrayed as hieroglyphic signs. Not satisfied with endless pages citing the Classical descriptions, Hill examined the specimen conserved in spirit in a jar at the British Museum.

Thomas Ford Hill is not a name associated with the earliest steps in the decipherment of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script, yet his work represents an important transitional moment in the move from antiquarianism to a science based on close observation and accurate recording of Egyptian antiquities. He was born in 1753, the son of George Hill, a glove manufacturer of Worcester, and his wife Elisabeth (née Ford). His older sister Elisabeth married a rich linen draper, Isaac Walker of Arnos Grove. Their son, John Walker, was also to correspond with Zoëga. The Hills and the Walkers were old Quaker families and Hill was destined for a commercial life in the linen trade. Finding himself of independent means after his parents died, he soon abandoned a career in the linen trade for antiquarian and literary pursuits, and travelled widely in Europe.

Hill journeyed through England, Wales and Scotland in the 1770s and early 1780s, noting down everything that he saw and the history of the places visited. He remained a compulsive writer throughout his life, recording daily what he had seen and done. Among his many notebooks are speculations on Egyptian hieroglyphs and studies of comparative mythologies, the mechanics of ancient architecture, ancient sepulchral monuments, and ancient writing. On his return to England from Europe he had his European journals, totalling over

3000 pages, bound in five quarto volumes of manuscript, and had his guide books to Rome and Florence, both heavily annotated, bound to match.

He was best known for the Erse, or Gaelic, songs, collected during a tour of Scotland in 1780, which were published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1782 and 1783, with a description of his Scottish journeys. He was motivated by a desire to throw some light on the 'Ossian' controversy. The debate raged around the authenticity of a cycle of epic poems said to be written by Ossian, a legendary ancient bard, which the Scottish poet James Macpherson claimed to have translated from ancient sources in the Scots Gaelic. 'Ossian' achieved international success and the poems greatly influenced the Romantic Movement in all the arts. However, Samuel Johnson considered Macpherson "a liar, and a fraud", and the poems forgeries.[1] Macpherson's texts only ever appeared in translation and the extent to which they were original or were adapted and altered by Macpherson remains unclear even today. Hill collected the songs without understanding the language and had them translated, but his interest in the etymology reflected current ideas about using language to prove a common source for all ancient civilisations. While unwilling to dismiss Macpherson outright, he noted that Macpherson had never published the original sources, and Hill never came across them while collecting his own material.

In 1784 Hill made his first visit to the continent with his friend William Parsons, remaining alone in Geneva to learn French, and becoming an ardent mountain-climbing enthusiast. On 9 August 1786, quite unaware that Mont Blanc was about to be climbed for the first time from the north side, Hill accompanied by his friend Hillyard and three guides set off on an attempt from the south. Although the first to ascend the Col du Geant from Courmayeur, they were forced to turn back.

> Thus, after two hours of exploration of the Col, they descended to Courmayeur and relative obscurity, while two explorers on the north side of the range (Paccard and Balmat) were descending to Chamonix and their unique place in the history of mountaineering.[2]

Hill arrived in Rome on 1 February 1787, aged 34, taking lodgings on the Corso, and his letters of introduction took him into the social circle of titled English Grand Tourists. He began a relentless round of sightseeing, regularly writing

1 M. Magnusson, *Fakers, Forgers & Phoneys*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2006), 340.

2 J. Lovatt, "Thomas Ford Hill: 'An Alpine Footnote' ", *The Alpine Journal* 99 (1994), edited by J. Merz, 38–39.

up his journal notes on each monument and work of art. Sir Richard Worsley, in Rome in retreat from the notoriety of his infamous divorce proceedings, invited him to view the collection of drawings made by his artist Willey Reveley on their travels in Greece. Albacini's[3] restoration of an antiquity for Worsley caused Hill to observe "How little of the statues called antique are antique".[4] Dining with the antiquary and banker Thomas Jenkins, he met Anthony Aufrere, a translator and antiquary living in Europe who was to become a close friend and the anonymous "Viatori A.", author of the biographical anecdotes published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* after Hill's death.[5] They spent the next two months together in the study of Roman monuments, antique sculpture, and sixteenth-century paintings. On Friday 1 June 1787, Hill sat for a small, oval, head and shoulders portrait in pastel to "the crayon portrait painter" Hugh Douglas Hamilton,[6] who specialised in creating a remarkable likeness in one sitting at an affordable price of about six guineas.

Hill travelled to Naples that summer, where he was immediately invited to dinner by Sir William Hamilton to be entertained by the singing of his "delightful" mistress Emma. The following winter Hill made an excursion to Sicily and Malta, returning to Rome in 1788 and "lived there in great intimacy with Cardinal Borgia and his Danish friend Zoëga, both distinguished and deeply versed in Oriental learning". As well as scholarly discussions there were energetic sightseeing trips around the city with Zoëga, Niels Schow,[7] and the sculptor Antonio Canova. From Rome, Hill travelled to Ravenna, then by Venice to Vienna, where he passed several weeks with Prince Kaunitz (1711–1794), the distinguished Austrian statesman. Hill left Vienna in the Spring of 1789, touring Prague, Dresden, Frankfurt, and the Netherlands, before returning to England in the Autumn of 1790 to a house at 43 "Charlotte Street,[8] Portland Place", filled

3 Carlo Albacini, sculptor, collector, and restorer.

4 In a letter to Zoëga, 15 January 1789, Hill also castigated the fashion for restoring (and thereby destroying) Old Master paintings.

5 "Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of Mr. Hill", *The Gentleman's Magazine* 66, 1st series (1796: Feb.), 126–131. Aufrere (1756–1833) had fled to Italy (where he also met the Rev. William Gunn, another correspondent of Zoëga's) to escape his creditors around 1785, (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online database), and J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800*, (New Haven, Conn. – London: Yale University Press, 1997), 34.

6 Not Gavin Hamilton, as stated in "Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of Mr. Hill" and repeated in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

7 Niels Schow (1754–1830), Danish classical scholar.

8 Charlotte Street, Portland Place, is now Hallam Street. See Richard Horwood, 1792–9 Maps of Georgian London (from Wikipedia).

with "books, maps, prints, fossils and other specimens of the love of Science and the Arts", where he kept Italian greyhounds. In 1791 he and Aufrere took the waters at Spa, famed for its hot springs, but Hill abstained from gambling "and frequently retired from society to the study of Egyptian antiquities, and to the completion of a set of hieroglyphicks which he was copying for Cardinal Borgia".[9]

Hill's visit to Paris, resulted in his controversial *Observations on the Politics of France, and their Progress since the last Summer, made in a Journey from Spa to Paris during the Autumn of 1791*.[10] *The Gentleman's Magazine* criticised the book, both for its "incoherent" style and for seeming too favourable to the revolution. A manuscript of Hill's own, unperformed, play, written 1792, was first called "Civil War", later "Sedition". It imagines an outbreak of revolution in the English spa town of Bath in England. More polemic than drama, the centrepiece is a didactic exchange between the reformist paterfamilias and a violent revolutionary.

Hill returned to England at the end of 1791, but revisited Spa in July 1792, writing to Aufrere

> that he was more than ever buried in mysteries and hieroglyphicks, and covered with the rust of Egyptian antiquity, being desired by his friend Zoëga at Rome, who was engaged in publishing upon the obelisks erected by the reigning Pope, to answer a variety of queries, and that he had consequently transferred his ideas from kings and national assemblies to basilisks, asps, and horned vipers, and from Gallic revolutions to the eternal stability of Egypt, upon which subjects he had written five folio sheets, and had brought with him materials for three more.[11]

After travelling to Germany with Aufrere to study the language, he returned home in 1792, having been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. By March 1794, he was back in Rome where he passed a "pleasant and instructive week in May at the villa of his learned friend Cardinal Borgia",[12] eventually moving south to Naples, where, to his regret, he missed witnessing the great eruption of Vesuvius that year. From Naples he was to make his final and fatal expedition into Calabria.

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9 "Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of Mr. Hill", 129.

10 (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1792). *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 66, 1st series (1792: Apr.), 361, incorrectly writes Spain for Spa (near Liege in present-day Belgium).

11 "Biographical and Literary Anecdotes of Mr. Hill", 129–130.

12 Ibid., 131.

Cardinal Stefano Borgia had established a museum for his collections of coins and manuscripts, in particular Coptic material. The Palazzo Borgia at Velletri, on the road from Rome to Naples, was one of the most sought-after destinations for the studious and curious visitors of the eighteenth-century Grand Tour[13] and Borgia encouraged the research and publication of his collections.[14]

Hill visited the Velletri museum in June 1787, in the company of "il cav. Riccardo Worstler", evidently Sir Richard Worsley,[15] who was to produce a two-volume catalogue of his own collections of antiquities, *Museum Worsleyanum*, (1798–1802). Under the patronage of Borgia, the eminent Danish scholar Georg Zoëga had settled permanently in Rome in 1783 to work on the Velletri collections. In 1784, Zoëga compiled the catalogue of Borgia's Egyptian antiquities, illustrated with drawings and prints. Seven years were spent in preparing his great work on all the then-known obelisks, *De origine et uso obeliscorum* (1797), which he combined with a critical view of the entire Egyptological literature.[16] The purpose of these obelisks was much debated in their correspondence. Were they perhaps *gnomons*; sun-dials or astronomical devices? Did they perhaps relate to the ancient standing stone circles of Britain, such as Stonehenge?

Despite the largely far-fetched and unscientific theories circulating about the nature of hieroglyphs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some observations of the period were correct. For example Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680), largely derided today for insisting that Egyptian writing was the symbolic embodiment of esoteric Egyptian wisdom and mystic Hermetic science, had nonetheless recognised that the ancient Egyptian language had

13 P. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti Borgiani conservato presso la Biblioteca nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele III" di Napoli: con un profilo scientifico di Stefano Borgia e Georg Zoega e una breve storia della formazione della collezione Borgiana*, Accademia dei Lincei Classe di scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche—Memorie, Serie IX, Volume XXV, Fascicolo 1, (Roma: Scienze e Lettere, 2009), 38.

14 Ibid., 41.

15 R. Langella (a cura di), *Stefano Borgia: epistolario privato. 2: 1784–1796*, Quaderni della Biblioteca 6, (Velletri: Città di Velletri, 1999), 82–83, nn. 308–309b, "A Gio Paolo Borgia, Roma 23 giugno 1787". Quoted in Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti borgiani*, 67, note 188. For Worsley's divorce, see H. Rubenhold, *Lady Worsley's Whim: An Eighteenth-Century Tale of Sex, Scandal and Divorce*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008).

16 E. Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 88 ff. and M. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, (London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 1995), 457.

survived into Coptic and that some of the hieroglyphic signs also had an alphabetical function.[17]

Zöega was to establish a methodology for decipherment, rather than attempt decipherment itself. He also considered that there was a phonetic as well as a symbolic element to the script, noted the importance of the way the hieroglyphs faced in an inscription, and believed correctly that the cartouche rings contained royal names. His methods were to influence Champollion's decipherment. He advocated the study of texts accompanying pictorial representations because the pictures would give a clue to the texts, and the drawings which Hill prepared for him followed those criteria. Above all, an accurate collection of all available hieroglyphic signs was essential and from this "he derived a list of 958 different signs which he arranged in groups according to the objects they represented".[18] In this project he was aided by Hill, amongst whose papers is a small red notebook with the title *Egyptian Hieroglyphics. Authors treating of them*, containing careful copies of hieroglyphs from the publications of scholars such as Kircher and travellers such as Frederic Norden. Hill also copied out the hieroglyphs into numbered lists, assembled frequently repeated groups, and speculated on the significance of the "beetles" and "mitred birds", "serpents" and "staffs". Although reluctant to come to any conclusions, he was "almost persuaded one may almost distinguish the comparative age of hieroglyphs by their simplicity".[19]

Despite having a strong constitution—he was an energetic walker and climber—Hill died "in the prime of life", aged forty-two, from a fever, perhaps malaria contracted at Paestum while pursuing "the investigation of the interesting antiquities of Magna Graecia".[20]

In his Egyptian studies, Hill can be seen as a disciple of Zoëga, still rooted in eighteenth-century antiquarianism but looking toward a more scientific approach. In his lifetime, archaeology (in particular the finds in Rome), collecting, learned societies, and travel accounts, combined to provide a less fanciful interpretation of Egyptian art and texts. There remained a long-winded dependence on the classics, and a feeling that hieroglyphs might remain an inscrutable puzzle, but Hill recognised that the signs represented the ancient Egyptians' material world and believed their symbolism related to religious rites rather than esoteric mystic wisdom. He was aware that bilingual

17 Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt*, 92–97.

18 Ibid., 119–120.

19 Hill's notebook *Egyptian Hieroglyphics*, 12. Private Collection.

20 Thomas Ford Hill's obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 65, 1st series (1795), 704.

inscriptions could provide the clue to decipherment, referring to "stones" on the staircase of the Ashmolean, with Arabic and hieroglyphic inscriptions, and was equally concerned with the importance of provenance. Hill gives a lengthy description of the discovery of EA 430, a 5th Dynasty relief from a tomb below the "Well of Birds", the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara. Of the Nectanebo slab, EA 22, he wrote:

> I examined the Register of the Museum through the help of Mr Harper, the Librarian, to discover, if it might be possible to discover any indication of the original site of this stone, but did not find a single word about it; the tradition says, as I have already observed, that it comes from Alexandria; or else, according to some, from Upper Egypt (…) this silence is truly a great lack of attention, in the guardians of our literary treasure (…).[21]

He supported Zoëga's belief that the style and quality of workmanship of Egyptian iconography were key to dating, and, most importantly, that, for decipherment, the production of 'an extensive and carefully reproduced collection of original hieroglyphical inscriptions' was the way forward.[22] Their attempts at dating remained confused by the Greek inscription on the Nectanebo slab, the many Egyptianising pieces found in Rome, the number of "restored" antiquities, and James Bruce's depiction of a harper from the tomb of Ramesses III as a classical figure. Hill did recognise the two slabs as architectural elements but the sacrifice of oxen on EA 430 was baffling. Why would Egyptians sacrifice and eat their god, the bull Apis?

Hill's close copies of the antiquities in the British Museum anticipate the watershed between the past and future study of ancient Egyptian remains. Hill's epigraphy highlights the chasm between the material available to the eighteenth-century scholars and the wealth of material which would result from the French expedition and survey—a mere eight years into the future—and the subsequent insistence on accuracy in copying monuments and inscriptions which marks the passage from antiquarianism to Egyptology.

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21 NKS 1585, 2: letter from Hill to Zoëga, "Londra. 15 Marzo" 1791 (fig. 16.3). Translation by P. Usick.

22 Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt*, 119.

FIGURE 16.1 *Thomas Ford Hill's drawing of the architectural slab of Nectanebo I, British Museum EA 22, from his letter to Zoëga, 10 October 1790. By kind permission of The Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

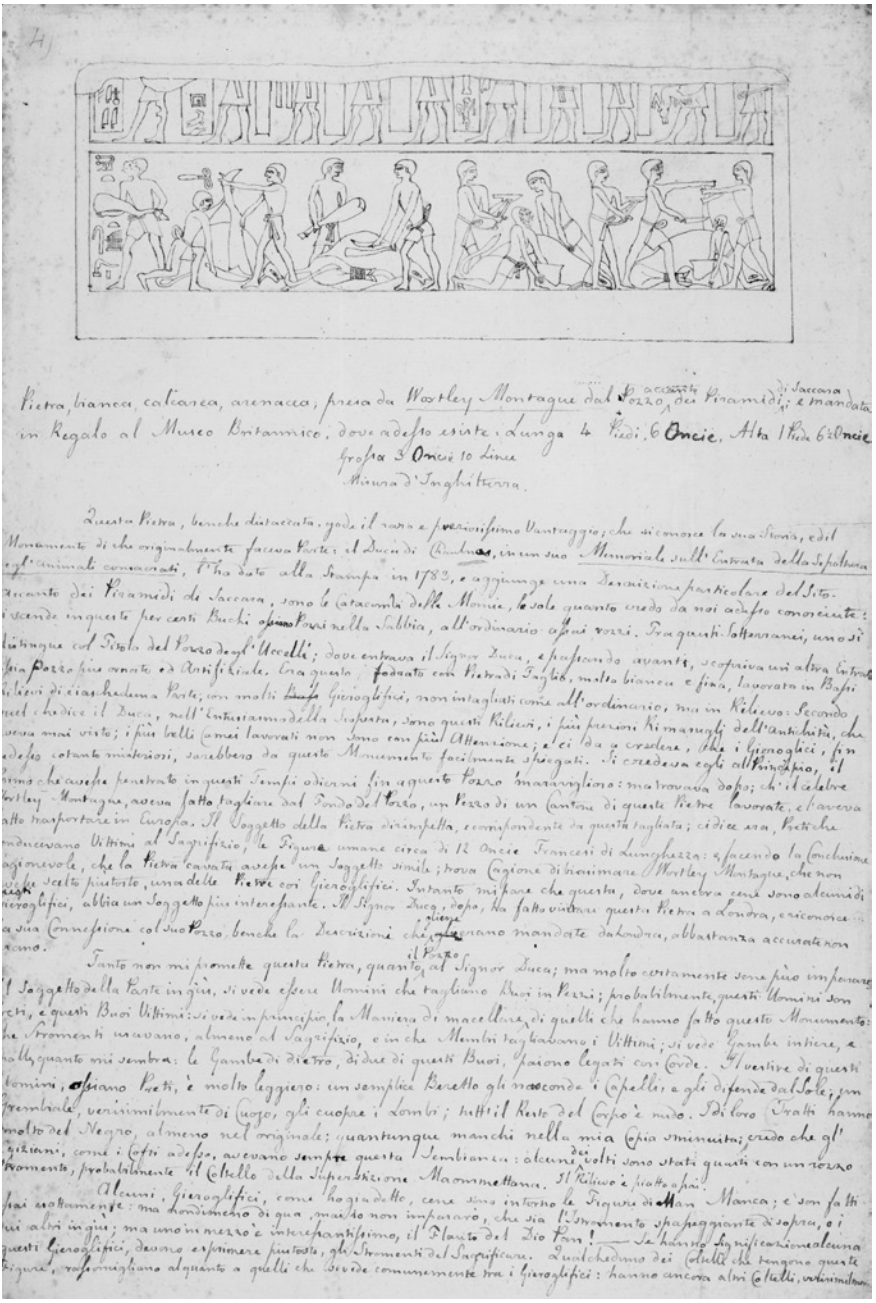

FIGURE 16.2 *Thomas Ford Hill's drawing of the sacrifice relief, British Museum EA 430, from his letter to Zoëga, 28 July 1791. By kind permission of The Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

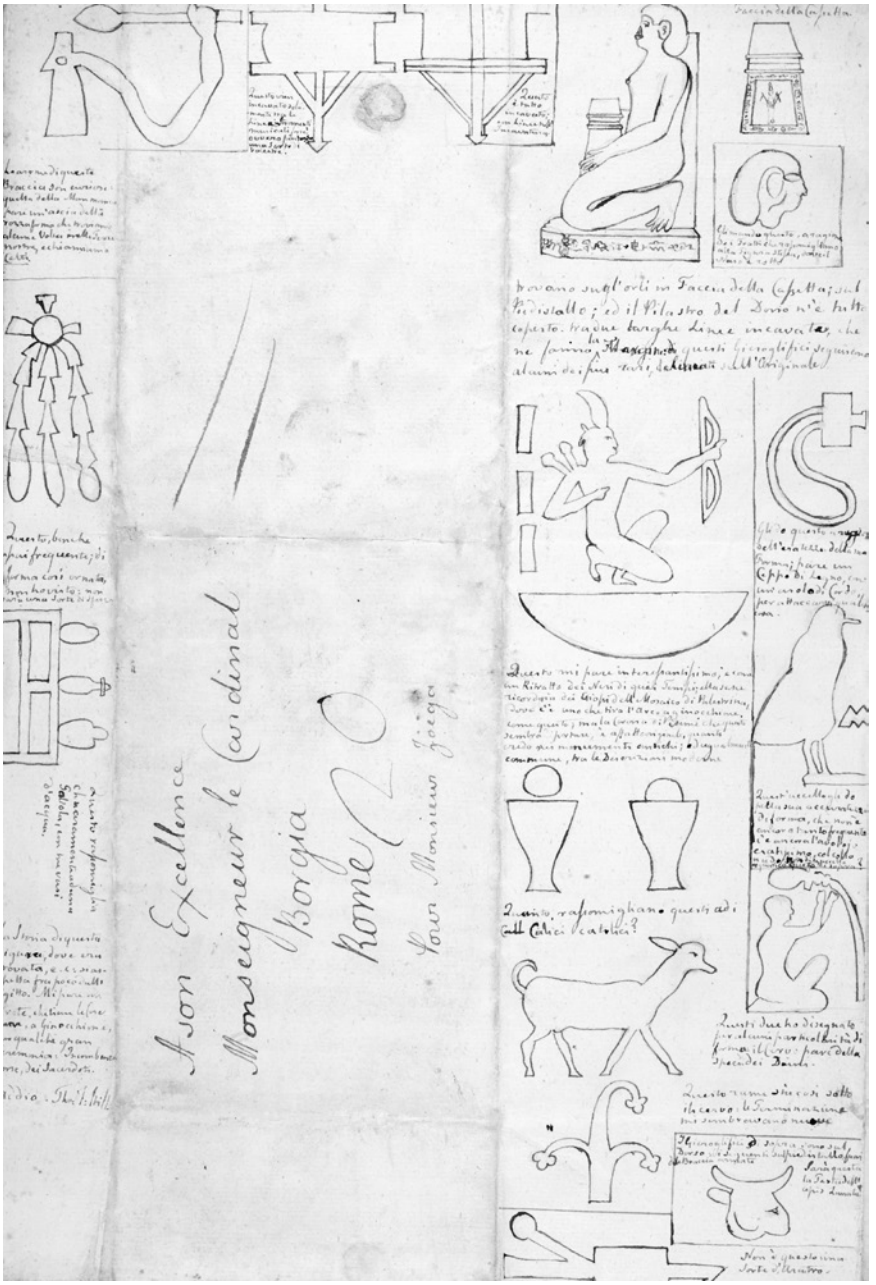

FIGURE 16.3 *Thomas Ford Hill's explanations of some hieroglyphs on the statue of Wahibre, British Museum EA 111, from his letter to Zoëga, 15 March 1791. By kind permission of The Royal Library, Copenhagen.*

CHAPTER 17

De origine et usu obeliscorum: Some Notes on an Eighteenth-century Egyptological Study

Emanuele M. Ciampini

With the publication of *De origine et usu obeliscorum* in 1797, Georg Zoëga gave a new input to the approach of Western culture to the pharaonic civilization.[1] The Egyptian antiquities, well-known in the Roman collections, had become the evidence of a civilization, already described by classical sources. Previous interpretations of the pharaonic culture represented the last step in the construction of an ideal Egypt, according to which these antiquities were part of an esoteric knowledge that went back directly to the last centuries of the ancient civilization. This approach is confirmed by some cultural phenomena, such as the alchemic sciences, or the neo-pagan doctrines.[2] We can recognise in these evidences a concept of the past, still linked to the present through a long chain. This link expresses a fundamental theory: the esoteric wisdom of the past, specifically of pharaonic Egypt, was still a useful tool in the comprehension of the world.

When Zoëga started his study for the publication on the obelisks,[3] many of these monuments were already erected in Rome: typical element of the urban model of the Pope's city, they were also the expression of those hermetic doctrines, elaborated as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, the traditional interpretation of the obelisks derives from a mixture of elements: proof of this can be seen in the so-called 'Pulcino della Minerva' by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, where the Egyptian monument is the sign of ancient

1 G. Zoëga, *De origine et usu obeliscorum ad Pium Sextum pontificem maximum*, (Romae: typis Lazzarinii Typographi Cameralis, 1797).

2 See the observations in E. Hornung, *The secret lore of ancient Egypt. Its impact on the West*, (London – Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1–4; 34–42.

3 For the preliminary work on the obelisks see the documents of the Danish scholars, published by Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft fur danische Sprache und Literatur, 2013); the study is already mentioned in a letter to his nephew, Wilhadus Christian Zoëga, dated to 21st January, 1786 (II, letter n. 277), but only in the winter of 1788–1789 Georg Zoëga started the work extensively, as confirmed by a letter to the prince Frederik VI of Denmark, dated 29th September, 1788 (II, letter n. 359).

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knowledge, supported by physical matter.[4] An esoteric interpretation of the pharaonic antiquity can also be found in some original architectural solutions that represent the ancient wisdom in a concrete form. For instance, we can mention here the Parco dei Mostri in Bomarzo, planned by Pirro Ligorio for Pier Francesco Orsini in 1547, where some Egyptian suggestions create an ideal world of knowledge, or the singular *pastiche* of ancient materials in the Porta Magica of Villa Palombara in Rome, whose core seems to be the alchemic sciences.[5]

In the last two decades of the eighteenth century, when Zoëga addresses the Egyptian obelisks, his main interest is not the meaning of these monuments in his contemporary culture, but rather their nature in the frame of the pharaonic civilization and, more generally, in the ancient world.[6] Thus, the study of the obelisks is the result of a complex approach, in which the presentation of the monuments in the contemporary and ancient context is mixed together with their history as reported by ancient sources.[7]

It is striking to find no mention of any philosophical or hermetic theory concerning the nature of these monuments in the entire work of the Danish scholar. The new perspective is fundamental in the conception of Antiquity and its material evidence, and fits in with the antiquarian model described by Jan Assmann. According to the German scholar, this model is the last step in the cultural representation of ancient Egypt before the birth of Egyptology.[8] Thus, the pharaonic civilization is now investigated as evidence of a past connected with the present time in a new framework: instead of a conception of 'wisdom' transmitted by the ancient culture, the new approach could be better understood as 'knowledge' of the culture's traces. The core of this new approach is represented by the conception of memory: the importance of such

4 The interpretation of the architectural elements in Bernini's monument recalls the famous symbolic reading of the group in F. Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, (Venetiis: in aedibus Aldi Manutii, 1499), 38.

5 For these readings of the pharaonic patterns in the Renaissance see also E.M. Ciampini, *Cercando un altro Egitto. Sopravvivenze di un'antica civiltà nella cultura europea*, (Milano: Unicopli, 2013), 70.

6 The interest of the Danish scholars in the Egyptian antiquities in Italian collections is confirmed by the observations on the pharaonic materials in Italy: D. Picchi, *Alle origini dell'Egittologia: le antichità egiziane di Bologna e di Venezia da un inedito di Georg Zoëga*, (Imola: La Mandragora, 2010).

7 The organisation of the work is clearly stated in the *Praefatio* of *De usu et origine obeliscorum*, vi–vii.

8 J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt. History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*, (Cambridge, Massachsetts – London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 432.

a phenomenon in the concept of the past and the position of Zoëga and his study on the obelisks are two interwoven aspects. The cultural memory seems to be the fundamental factor in the definition of an idea of the Egyptian antiquities as evidence of a lost history; at the same time, some monumental evidence, such as the obelisks, may represent a concrete trace of that past. In this approach, memory and antiquarianism are two aspects in the reconstruction of ancient Egypt: while the first is the result of a process born with Hellenism, the latter is more typical of a cultural trend dealing with ancient Egypt since the eighteenth century.

In this perspective, the work of Georg Zoëga is perfectly coherent with the antiquarian trend: his study focuses on the obelisks as concrete materials of the past and whose nature has already been investigated by the classical sources.[9] We deal with a more complex feeling of the past, which can be classified as 'memorialization'[10] and whose dynamics can be defined in a historical perspective. The past becomes the object of a scientific reconstruction, and the pale memory of the civilization is filled with the presence of the physical traces of the antiquity. Some elements of the antiquity were already known to Western culture: the Gnostic and hermetic doctrines, for instance, represented for the Renaissance the core of a wisdom described by Marsilio Ficino as a *Prisca Theologia*,[11] but, these doctrinal elements were typically considered in isolation from the ancient materials of the same past. A fundamental passage for the 'idea' of Egypt was certainly the publication in 1499 of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo. Despite the data collected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this 'idea' was still restricted in the framework of the general reading of antiquity, ruled by Hellenism and Hebraism. In this framework, the analysis of Zoëga on the obelisks may represent a fundamental passage in the sense of antiquity: his work identifies an Egyptian monumental typology, which becomes the core of the several, original approaches of the scholar.

This attitude of Zoëga as a scholar of antiquity appears in the organisation of the topics, as summarised in the synopsis: here we find the guidelines of an original idea of the Egyptian antiquities in his perspective.[12] After an *excursus* concerning the ancient sources on the obelisks and the Egyptian written

9 Such a statement is confirmed by the work of Ammianus Marcellinus on the texts of the obelisks.

10 For this phenomenon see Assmann, *Mind of Egypt*, 425–426; with the memorialization, Egypt is recognised as part of "Europe's self-image", together with Israel and Greece.

11 Hornung, *Secret Lore*, 84; this interpretation of the pharaonic tradition as revelation confirms the role of the Egyptian culture together with the Bible.

12 Zoëga, *De origine et usu obeliscorum*, i–xxviii ("*Synopsis operis*").

materials, the author describes the monuments erected in Rome, as well as in other cities and in Egypt. The third section of the work is devoted to the nature of the monuments: their name, shape, materials, etc. Here, some attention should be paid to the nature of the hieroglyphic writing: the interpretation of this ancient iconic system is organised according to the information Zoëga could have gleaned from ancient sources, and the reconstruction starts from the theories of previous scholars, such as Kircher. The study also reconstructs the history of the obelisks, or better, their inner chronology, organised in four sections: a first period (in the text, *epocha*), with information on the presence of the monuments in Egypt according to some ancient writers; the second period is identified with the last centuries of pharaonic history, ruled by foreign dynasties; the last two periods are the Roman rule, and the reuse of the obelisks in the Renaissance. It is clear enough, from this preliminary information, that these monuments are no longer the expression of an esoteric wisdom, but rather the traces of an ancient civilization, with their own meaning.

The approach to the Egyptian antiquities, as expressed in the work, stresses the concept of the pharaonic culture according to those elements that we now identify with the semantics of the pharaonic civilization. Such a concept is fundamental, for instance, in the role of writing as a formal sign of the culture. We deal with a concept of Egyptian writing that is going to change the perspective of its own nature: in the fifteenth century, the hieroglyphic system was still connected to hermetic wisdom. The elaboration of the winged eye by Leon Battista Alberti may be considered as the typical expression of an approach that we can call neo-hieroglyphs:[13] in Alberti's perspective, the writing is no longer the expression of an ancient culture, but rather the result of a philosophy, whose origin is identified with pharaonic Egypt.

In the reconstruction by Georg Zoëga, the hieroglyphs are the expression of the Egyptian culture, and their nature has to be investigated in a new perspective. This aspect of ancient Egypt had been connected with the obelisks for a long time, but from then on the inscriptions on the monuments became the starting point for an analysis of its writing system. The methodology chosen by Zoëga distinguishes the reconstruction made by modern scholars (see for instance Kircher) from the reading reconstructed using ancient sources (particularly Clemens of Alexandria) and also the Coptic. The mark of this new approach is the role of the obelisk in the reconstruction of the writing, and other aspects of the Egyptian civilization: the presence of these monuments in

13 L.D. Morenz, "Neohieroglyphs of the Italian Renaissance. Tradition and its Invention", in *Philosophers and Hieroglyphs*, edited by L. Morra, C. Bazzanella, (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2003), 50–73.

Rome is certainly an important factor for the analysis, but they are now a key to open the door to the ancient cultural patterns.

Zoëga's perspective obviously moves from the Roman obelisks: he deals with the main monuments erected in the city, evidence of the past and, at the same time, part of an urbanistic programme planned at least from the times of Sixtus V. Their use in the city, connected with the discovery of Roman antiquities, is part of the interest dominating Zoëga's study: the analysis of the Roman obelisks is the first section of a catalogue of these monuments, which describes the monuments erected in other Italian cities, as well as those in Europe and in the Mediterranean. The last two sections are dedicated to the obelisks in Egypt and in Ethiopia. The data collected here are important evidence for the diffusion of the diaries and drawings of travellers in the culture of the period.[14] In the analysis of the scholar the monuments in Egypt are described following the river upstream: thus, Zoëga represents the Land of the Nile according to a well-known cultural map, whose origin dates back to classical antiquity.[15]

This section is one of the richest of the study for the information on pharaonic antiquities: the description of the obelisks in Egypt also mentions their erection in front of the pharaonic temples as well as their use in a funerary context. Thus, they become an actual element of the Egyptian culture, and not only part of the new European urban model. The stress on their use in the sacred area opens up some interesting sections, where other aspects of the Egyptian culture are described, such as the myth of Osiris, or the nature of the Egyptian tomb according to the famous passage of Hecataeus of Abdera, quoted by Diodorus Siculus.[16] The main sign of the pharaonic culture connected with the obelisks, i.e. the writing, is described in the next part of the work and it also includes a description of the scenes on the base, the top and the *pyramidion*. At the same time, some attention should also be given to the layout of the texts. The type of interpretation of these data is innovative and probably the result of an antiquarian approach, well known from the seventeenth century onwards. But we have also to note that Zoëga's interest is

14 An evidence of this careful preliminary work can be found, for instance, in the long report of the English scholar Thomas Ford Hill sent to Zoëga and dated 13th July, 1792: Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, letter n. 572; this document is interesting for the profound criticism of the information.

15 This image of Egypt recalls other famous depictions, such as the Mosaic of Palestrina, or the plansphere of Fra' Mauro Camaldolese, now in the Biblioteca Marciana at Venice.

16 The cultural value of the tomb, as depicted in the passage of the ancient writer, has been frequently stressed, see Assmann, *Mind of Egypt*, 67.

not limited to the pharaonic evidence: for instance, he also quotes the Latin inscriptions of some Roman basements, dating back to the Imperial period.[17]

The approach to the hieroglyphs is surely part of the interest of Georg Zoëga in the Egyptian past and its texts are investigated to reconstruct a fundamental 'medium' for the comprehension of the ancient civilization. What is remarkable for us is the system adopted in the explanation of the signs. We can refer, for instance, to those examples where the meaning of the single sign is explained with a system, which recalls the words of ancient authors, such as Herodotus, Diodorus, Clemens of Alexandria and Ammianus Marcellinus,[18] but the model for it is also Horapollo' *Hieroglyphica*. Such a perspective is not a creation of this author of Late Antiquity, but is rather the final expression of that system in the interpretation of hieroglyphics: we can recognize a similar interpretation, for instance, in the Roman papyrus from Tanis with the list of signs.[19] The explanation of the signs made by Zoëga is the result of a work of collection and comparison of several ancient theories, starting with Horapollo. The role of this text, clearly connected with the priestly science of writing in the late temple period, is fundamental in the work of Georg Zoëga: such a use of the ancient tradition on the hieroglyphs has now been recognized as the background for those late pagan doctrines, still alive in the Alexandria of the Late Antiquity period.[20]

These elements prove the interest of the Danish scholar in the reconstruction of the context of the monuments. They also highlight the feeling for pharaonic semantics in eighteenth century Europe: obelisks, sarcophagi, statues, and other inscribed objects clearly represent the ancient culture and contribute to the knowledge of the pharaonic civilization. When Georg Zoëga started to

17 Among these Latin texts, we can here mention the inscription of the Roman basement of the Lateran Obelisk, once erected in the Circus Maximus; some fragments of this basement were used by Domenico Fontana and Carlo Maderno for the restoration of the monument in its current position, as recorded in the inscription under the *pyramidion*, dated 1588; part of these texts of the Roman basement were collected during the restoration of the monument (2008).

18 Zoëga, *De origine et usu obeliscorum*, 441–445.

19 F.Ll. Griffith, W.M.F. Petrie, *Two hieroglyphic papyri from Tanis. The Sign Papyrus* (*a Syllabary*)*; the Geographical Papyrus* (*an Almanack*), (London: Trübner, 1889).

20 In a recent study, the model of Horapollo has been identified as "Schriftsinn": A. von Lieven, "Wie töricht war Horapollo? Zur Ausdeutung von Schriftzeichen im Alten Ägypten", in *Honi soit qui mal y pense. Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 194, herausgegeben von H. Knuf, Ch. Leitz, D. Von Recklinghausen, (Leuven – Paris – Walpole MA: Peeters, 2010), 567–574.

work on the obelisks, the perception of ancient Egypt was something close to the Roman idea of the Land of the Nile: an ancient world, still alive in the temple, and the model of an ideology which was closely related to the Roman concept of the *numen imperatoris*. The Egyptian wisdom was a feature of the Renaissance culture, and the study of the hieroglyphs started in order to discover the message hidden in the iconic system. The approach of the Danish scholar opens a new perspective in the study of Egyptian antiquities: traces of a past and a culture still able to speak through its own language. Thus, the Egyptian monuments are no longer the object of hermetic or new pagan doctrines, they are rather the object of an antiquarian feeling stressing the separation of the past and the present. This is not the end, but the beginning of a new phase: the antiquity is now alive in its semantics, and the aim of modern culture is to make it speak with its own language.

Zoëga and the Origins of Coptic Studies

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CHAPTER 18

Gli studi copti fino a Zoëga

Tito Orlandi

La storia degli studi copti è stata tracciata con una certa efficacia da molto tempo e da studiosi di grande erudizione e serietà. In primo luogo va menzionato Étienne Quatremère (1782–1857), il cui contributo fu e resta fondamentale.[1] L'unica debolezza che gli si può imputare è un certo nazionalismo gallico;[2] non si deve dimenticare, tuttavia, che egli si valse di un pregevole contributo di Charles Woide,[3] molto dettagliato e consapevole. Sulla scia di Quatremère possiamo considerare Amedeo Peyron[4] e Ludwig Stern[5] che, pur tracciando un utile percorso critico, sono assai concisi. Essi non risalgono comunque oltre Athanasius Kircher. Per aggiungere altri dettagli occorrerà arrivare alle pagine dedicate ai manoscritti copti Vaticani dal grande (anche in questo campo) Giorgio Levi Della Vida,[6] al quale è opportuno affiancare Arnold van Lantschoot, sia per il fondo della Vaticana,[7] sia per la monografia su Tommaso Obicini.[8] Ancora, sul reperimento e sulla conoscenza di manoscritti, e non solo copti, verte l'utilissima indagine di Oleg Volkoff.[9] Più recentemente Stephen Emmel ha esposto una sintesi efficace della situazione, ponendo particolare attenzione alla creazione dei caratteri tipografici.[10] Tutte

1 E.M. Quatremère, *Recherches critiques et historiques sur la langue et la littérature de l'Égypte*, (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1808).

2 A cui non sfugge peraltro anche Sidney H. Aufrère (cfr. *infra*).

3 "Mémoire de M. Woide sur le dictionnaire qu'il va publier à Oxford, et sur les Savants qui ont étudié la lange copte", *Journal des Savants* (Juin 1774), 333–343.

4 V.A. Peyron, *Grammatica Linguae Copticae*, (Torino: ex Regio Typographaeo, 1841).

5 L.C. Stern, *Koptische Grammatik*, (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1880).

6 G. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della biblioteca Vaticana*, (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1939).

7 A. Hebbelynck, A. van Lantschoot, *Codices coptici Vaticani Barberiniani Borgiani Rossiani*, I–II, (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1937, 1947).

8 A. van Lantschoot, *Un précurseur d'Athanase Kircher: Thomas Obicini et la Scala Vat. Copte 71*, (Louvain: Bureaux du Muséon, 1948).

9 O.V. Volkoff, *À la recherche de manuscrits en Égypte*, (Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1970).

10 S. Emmel, "Coptic studies before Kircher", in *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium. Proceedings of the VII International Congress of Coptic Studies*, I, edited by M. Immerzeel, J. van der Vliet, (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 1–14.

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queste ricerche sono state da ultimo riprese ampiamente da Aufrère nella bella monografia su Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc[11] e poi, con la collaborazione di Nathalie Bosson, nel catalogo di una mostra sull'Egitto[12] e nell'edizione della *Grammatica* di Bonjour.[13] I contributi di Aufrère e Bosson rappresenterebbero oggi l'ultima parola sulla storia dei primi studi linguistici copti, se non peccassero di un troppo marcato interesse verso la Francia e verso le due figure di Peiresc e Bonjour.

Tutto questo sconsiglierebbe, a prima vista, di riprendere l'argomento, se non fosse per due motivi di un certo peso. Da un lato in una raccolta in onore di Georg Zoëga non poteva mancare un quadro che rappresentasse il progresso degli studi copti prima che Zoëga apparisse sulla scena. Ma, soprattutto, gli autori che abbiamo sopra ricordato (con la parziale eccezione di Aufrère) si sono limitati alla cronaca erudita del succedersi degli studi, senza cercare di trarre dei giudizi qualitativi su di essi e sui loro rapporti con la storia culturale e non solo.

Rimane dunque da fare un lavoro più propriamente storico, legando gli studi copti da un lato alla nascita della linguistica e dall'altro agli intrecciati sviluppi di religiosità, cultura, e società dei secoli XVI–XVIII. Ciò permette, fra l'altro, di restituire maggior proporzione alle varie personalità, che al momento rimangono quasi tutte su uno stesso piano di importanza.

Tale compito richiederebbe un impegno e soprattutto uno spazio che superano i limiti del presente contributo. Esso intende dunque soltanto indicare alcuni principali temi, nel quadro di una chiara periodizzazione, essenziale alla comprensione del valore storico e culturale degli studi che vengono presi in considerazione.

Fino al 1441

Un primo periodo, nello sviluppo della conoscenza della realtà copta, va posto nella tarda antichità, e fino al XIII secolo, nello stesso Egitto, che per merito precipuo degli Assalidi fu caratterizzato dal cosiddetto rinascimento copto.

11 S.H. Aufrère, *La Momie & la Tempête: Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc et la "Curiosité Égyptienne" en Provence au début du XVII^e siècle*, (Avignon: Éditions A. Barthelemy, 1989).

12 N. Bosson, S.H. Aufrère (éd.), *Égyptes . . . l'égyptien et le copte: catalogue de l'exposition*, (Lattes: Musée archéologique Henri Prades, 1999), 91–129.

13 S.H. Aufrère, N. Bosson, *Guillaume Bonjour*, Elementa linguae copticae. *Grammaire inédite du XVII^e siècle*, (Genève: Cramer, 2005).

Soltanto tenendo nella dovuta considerazione questo periodo sarà possibile apprezzare le origini degli studi copti in Occidente.

Nella tarda antichità la lingua e la cultura copte sono ancora vive, e gli studi autoctoni che le riguardano sono coltivati per fini immediati. Per l'aspetto tecnicamente linguistico possiamo registrare da un lato esercizi grammaticali,[14] dall'altro strumenti pratici, come un interessantissimo manuale trilingue,[15] o quanto possiamo presumere dei sistemi di traduzione.[16] Per la cultura ecclesiastica occorre ricordare soprattutto la sistemazione sinassariale,[17] che possiamo collocare nell'VIII secolo, da cui deriva, a causa del modo di produrre e organizzare i titoli,[18] una sorta di storia della letteratura copta, da cui dipende la sistemazione della liturgia.

Tutto questo avrà un notevole influsso sulla conoscenza dei copti in Occidente, perché essa fu basata su documenti (manoscritti) quasi esclusivamente del IX–XI secolo, e darà un'idea della loro cultura secondo parametri voluti dagli stessi copti nell'VIII–IX secolo, oltretutto, e paradossalmente, con buona aderenza ai canoni di quella che oggi chiamiamo *patristica*, voluti dai bizantini (anticalcedonensi).

Questo farà perdere la percezione degli avvenimenti ecclesiastici ma soprattutto dogmatici (anti-origenismo, fenomenologia dell'ascetismo, ecc.) che hanno formato la cultura dell'ambiente che possiamo qualificare come copto[19] e che a tutt'oggi si fatica a recuperare.

Nella prima fase degli studi europei sui copti, in pieno Rinascimento, la loro conoscenza venne oltretutto filtrata da quanto era avvenuto nel periodo arabo (qui ci riferiamo soprattutto al XIII secolo). Ricorderemo a questo proposito che il prevalere della lingua araba sul copto (e in parte minore, o diversa, sul greco) e la conseguente necessità di salvaguardare la memoria del copto per leggere e tradurre i testi sinassariali e la vera e propria liturgia determinarono

14 R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

15 J. Kramer, *Glossaria Bilinguia in Papyris et Membranis reperta*, (Bonn: Habelt, 1983).

16 T. Orlandi, "La traduzione copta di Eusebio di Cesarea, HE", *Rendiconti Lincei. Scienze morali, storiche, filologiche* serie IX, vol. V (1994), 399–456; I. Gardner, *Kellis Literary Texts*, I, (Oakville – Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1996).

17 T. Orlandi, "Literature, Coptic", in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, V, edited by A.S. Atiya (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 1450–1460.

18 P. Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta. Studio storico e tipologico*, (Pisa: Giardini, 2005).

19 T. Orlandi, "La copticità dell'Egitto copto", in *Egitto dai Faraoni agli Arabi. Atti del Convegno "Egitto: amministrazione, economia, società, cultura dai Faraoni agli Arabi"*, a cura di S. Bussi, (Pisa – Roma: Fabrizio Serra editore, 2013), 229–240.

la formazione di un'attività scolastica—nota attraverso i manuali di cui parleremo tra breve—che furono anche lo strumento di apprendimento del copto da parte dei primi studiosi occidentali.[20]

I manuali in questione sono di due tipi, in stretta correlazione fra loro: il primo era chiamato *muqaddimah*, cioè introduzione (*scil.* alle *sullam*), e costituiva una sorta di grammatica (in realtà si tratta di parole riunite secondo certe loro caratteristiche, sia formali sia di significato); il secondo tipo era detto *sullam*, cioè scala, ovvero tabella, un testo disposto in verticale, secondo la normale prassi dei traduttori, somigliante ad un rudimentale vocabolario.

Insieme con questa attività che possiamo definire tecnica, riservata alla lingua, se ne svolse una di tipo teorico, per rispondere ad esigenze di carattere apologetico, nei confronti dell'Islam, e di carattere informativo, per i copti, a beneficio dei quali si dovevano sintetizzare le dottrine, i canoni, e la liturgia della Chiesa.[21] Registriamo così le opere di Sawirus al Moqaffa, il primo autore copto-arabo (X secolo), ottimo divulgatore dottrinale e anche storico del Patriarcato alessandrino. Più tardi si affermarono Abu Shakir, Ibn al Rahid, autore di una *Enciclopedia* religiosa, e i tre fratelli Assalidi (figli di al Assal). Da ultimo Abu'l Barakat, autore della più importante enciclopedia, dal titolo trasparentemente metaforico *Lampada nella tenebra*.

1441–1636

Il secondo periodo riguarda gli inizi della conoscenza della 'realtà copta' in Occidente. Esso può essere posto a partire dal Concilio di (Ferrara-)Firenze, cioè dal 1441 fino al 1636, quando fu pubblicata la grammatica di Kircher.

Tale conoscenza avviene in maniera disordinata e non per precisa volontà; comunque dipende da diversi tipi di attività culturale, che devono essere valutati nelle loro manifestazioni caratteristiche: viaggi di conoscenza; ricerca e

20 W. Vicychl, "Muqaddimah" e "Sullam", in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, VIII, 166–169, 204–207. A. Sidarus, "La tradition sahidique de philologie greco-copto-arabe (manuscrits des XIII^{e}–XV^{e} siècles)", in *Études Coptes VII: Neuvième Journée d'Études coptes* (*Montpellier, juin 1999*), édité par N. Bosson, (Paris – Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 265–304.

21 A.S. Atiya, "Literature, Copto-Arabic", in *Coptic Encyclopedia*, V, 1460–1467; A. Mallon, *Une école de savants égyptiens au moyen âge*, (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1906); A. Sidarus, "Place et rôle de l'Antiquité gréco-romaine dans la littérature copto-arabe", in *Graeco-Latina et Orientalia, Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani heptagenarii*, edidit S. Kh. Samir, J.P. Monferrer-Sala, (Cordoba – Beirut: CNERU-CEDRAC, 2013), 327–358; S. Kh. Samir, J. Nielsen (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period* (*750–1258*), (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

acquisizione di manoscritti; studio della lingua. Ciò non vuol dire che l'esistenza delle comunità cristiane in Egitto fosse ignota durante il Medio Evo: basterà ricordare i commerci vivaci, soprattutto con Venezia (da cui deriva l'episodio del trafugamento delle reliquie di S. Marco da Alessandria), e le notizie riportate dai crociati. Ma le idee su tali comunità erano assai confuse, e tali resteranno per molto tempo. La svolta fondamentale avvenne quando il rappresentante della Chiesa copta al Concilio di Firenze, giunto nel 1441, portò in dono al Papa alcuni manoscritti, tuttora nella Biblioteca Vaticana. Ciò determinò un interesse per il copto, all'interno di quello comune alle lingue delle traduzioni bibliche, e alle liturgie delle Chiese orientali.

Inizia di qui un complicato rapporto dialettico fra la conoscenza dell'Egitto e dei copti, e la comprensione della lingua. La documentazione relativa è fornita dalla letteratura di viaggi,[22] dai trattati sulle lingue, da opere riguardanti la filologia religiosa (soprattutto le lingue bibliche), ivi compresi epistolari e biografie. Non mette conto qui di elencare una volta di più gli studiosi che entrarono in gioco, potendo rimandare alla letteratura indicata all'inizio. Cercheremo invece di mettere in evidenza i caratteri generali che riteniamo particolarmente significativi, e le personalità che consideriamo di particolare rilievo.

La presenza a Roma di manoscritti copti suscitò, primo fra tutti, l'interesse di Leonardo Abela (m. 1605), di origine maltese, precursore molto apprezzato, all'epoca, degli studi orientalistici, fra cui quelli copti, che tuttavia non produsse alcuna pubblicazione. I manoscritti conservati nella Biblioteca del Papa (oggi Apostolica Vaticana), oltre a quelli donati dai copti durante il Concilio di Firenze, erano stati portati da Girolamo Vecchietti (1557–1637), che aveva viaggiato in Egitto per negoziazioni col Patriarca copto, e da Pietro della Valle. La notizia giunse probabilmente al celebre Ioseph Iustus Scaliger (1540–1609).[23] Egli, pur essendo nato in Francia (Agen) e avendo concluso la carriera all'università di Leiden, va considerato uno dei grandi rappresentanti dell'Umanesimo italiano, e più specificatamente veneto, perché nato da un dotto medico che si pretendeva della famiglia della Scala (onde il cognome), che per la sua professione aveva seguito il suo signore Antonio della Rovere, divenuto vescovo di Agen. Ioseph Iustus si interessò alla lingua copta per la filologia biblica; cercò egli stesso manoscritti copti, ed avrebbe voluto pubblicare il *Salterio* copto.

Nel frattempo quella che abbiamo chiamato la realtà copta si veniva precisando per merito dei viaggiatori, che mettevano via via a fuoco la situazione

22 Utilissima ma non esaustiva la collana *Voyageurs occidentaux en Égypte*, Le Caire, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.

23 Cfr. Emmel, "Coptic studies before Kircher".

anche culturale dell'Egitto, fornendo un quadro entro il quale si collocherà l'immagine della civiltà copta.

Si noti che l'interesse per l'Egitto andava di conserva con quello per l'Oriente in generale, cioè per la Terrasanta, l'Impero Ottomano, e l'Impero Persiano, fra l'altro sullo sfondo della contesa fra imperi islamici e cristiani, che ben presto darà luogo ai ben noti fatti bellici.

Leone Africano (moro di Spagna profondamente occidentalizzato, 1485–1550 ca.),[24] fu un singolare precursore, essendo l'unico a menzionare i monasteri dell'Alto Egitto (libro VIII). Vissuto prevalentemente a Roma, era interessato soprattutto all'economia, al commercio e al governo. Era consapevole che i non arabi (gli autoctoni) chiamavano l'Egitto *Chibth*: "(. . .) les habitants s'atribuent ce nom d'eux mêmes: et n'est demeuré autre branche des naturels Égyptiens, que ceux qui se sont jusques à present maintenus en la Loy Chrétienne".[25]

Pierre Belon du Mans (Belonius, 1517–1564) viaggiò nel Vicino Oriente nel 1546–1549 e scrisse un libro[26] che diventerà famoso e costituirà la guida principale per i viaggiatori successivi, anche se prevalentemente incentrato sulla botanica. Le sue osservazioni concernono soprattutto la geografia, la fauna, la flora, gli usi e i costumi. Sull'Egitto[27] è preciso ma superficiale, perché poco interessato alle antichità (salvo le piramidi e la sfinge) e ai Cristiani, tanto che non sembra distinguere fra Giacobiti e Melchiti.

George Sandys (1577–1644; in Egitto nel 1612 ca.),[28] fu osservatore molto acuto. Egli dimostra una grande erudizione in tutti i testi classici che riguardano l'Egitto, inclusi poeti come Lucano, e si diffonde nella storia antica e tolemaica, oltre che su quella successiva alla conquista araba, e sulla geografia. Ai copti dedica molta attenzione, trascurando però la lingua.

Il più grande di tutti fu comunque Pietro della Valle.[29] Uomo di grande erudizione e spirito critico, il suo rapporto sull'Egitto, dove viaggiò nel 1616, è ricco di osservazioni anche sui copti:

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24 Leon Africain, *Description de l'Afrique*, (Anvers: Imprimerie Christophe Plantin, 1556). Originariamente in italiano, 1550.

25 Ibid., 336.

26 P. Belon, *Les observations de plusieur singularitez et choses mémorables trouvées en Grèce, Asie, Judée, Egypte, Arabie . . .*, (Paris: H. de Marnef et Vve G. Cavellat, 1588).

27 Vol. II, capitolo XV.

28 G. Sandys, *A Relation of a journey begun an. dom. 1610 . . .*, (London: W. Barrett, 1615); S. Lee, "Sandys, George", in *Dictionary of National Biography*, L, (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1897), 290–293.

29 *De' Viaggi di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino . . .*, I–II, (Brighton [in realtà Torino]: Gancia, 1843). Si veda la biografia di G.B. Bellori premessa all'edizione 1662 dei *Viaggi*, e riportata nell'edizione citata sopra.

> Vidi poi [ad Alessandria] la chiesuola di S. Marco, che fu già patriarcale del medesimo santo, ed oggi è tenuta dai Cristiani cofti, cioè egizii; che egizio significa la voce guptios, levata la e in principio, e pronunziando essi la g all'antica, e la y con suono di v; la qual voce guptios o gubti, come anche dicono più all'arabica, dai nostri poi corrottamente si dice cofto.[30]
>
> Ha dunque da sapere che qui in Egitto, fra quei Cristiani che ho nominati altre volte Cofti, ho trovato una lingua particolare, con una scrittura, i caratteri della quale, tanto di forma quanto di nome, sono tutti greci (benché alterati un poco nella pronunzia), eccetto di otto che ne hanno di più de' Greci di pronunzia e figura differenti, fra i quali ancora volendo io, per curiosità, averne un poco di cognizione, ci ho trovato qualche corrispondenza con le cose greche . . . Vedo che i Cofti nei loro libri si chiamano Egizii, come accennai nel principio.[31]
>
> (. . .) cosa che prova non solo l'antichità della scrittura cofta, ma . . . che i geroglifici in que' tempi non fossero altrimenti lettere comuni degli Egizii . . . spererei che in tal modo anche questa perduta e morta lingua egizia dei Cofti si potesse al mondo risuscitare con notabil benefizio e delle belle lettere per la sua antichità, ed anco della Chiesa.[32]

Sarà importante, in futuro, approfondire la personalità di questi esploratori per meglio valutare le notizie che ci forniscono sui copti, così come il rapporto fra i viaggi e l'interesse per lo studio della lingua copta (l'interesse per la comunità copta, come tale, sembra essere assai scarso), che è il vero discrimine fra semplici viaggiatori (Belon, Sandys) e studiosi (della Valle). E l'interesse dovrà concentrarsi inevitabilmente sugli studi di linguistica (grammatica), perché altri studi sostanzialmente non ce n'erano, salvo sulla liturgia e sulla Bibbia. Bisognerà tuttavia operare una soddisfacente valutazione storica dei fini che ciascuno si poneva, in relazione ai propri interessi e alle proprie attitudini, valutando gli studi grammaticali e linguistici nel quadro di ciò che li aveva determinati.

Fino a questa fase, comunque, si è allo stadio dell'erudizione pura, venata di nazionalismi. Ne può beneficiare la ricerca storica sulla linguistica in generale; per il *nostro* studio del copto non ha molta importanza, ma ne ha per la personalità di Zoëga.

Tornando ora alle ricadute accademiche, in assenza di strumenti grammaticali, il primo dei quali fu portato a Roma dal della Valle, si diede la priorità alle ricerche sull'alfabeto e di conseguenza alla creazione dei caratteri tipografici,

30 Idid., 169.

31 Ibid., 204.

32 Ibid., 208.

che sarebbero poi serviti a stampare i testi. Ricordiamo le ricerche di Giovanni Battista Raimondi e i primi caratteri prodotti dalla Poliglotta Vaticana.[33] La conoscenza degli alfabeti era del resto finalizzata anche alla genealogia delle lingue, che molto stava a cuore agli umanisti. Fra questi ritengo figura di spicco Teseo Ambrogio degli Albonesi (1469–1540),[34] autore di un libro singolare,[35] il cui titolo, che consta di tre frasi indipendenti, va considerato nella sua interezza: *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam, atque Armenicam, & decem alias linguas. Characterum differentium Alphabeta, circiter quadraginta, & eorundem invicem conformatio. Mystica et cabalistica quamplurima scitu digna*. Si vede bene quale fosse l'intreccio di interessi che stava alla base di questi primi studi di lingue non classiche, come già notava il biografo Pietro Terenzio: "L'astrologia, la cabalistica, la magia, la stregoneria diventarono quindi sì generale e gradita occupazione delle menti in quel secolo (…)"[36] e come dunque l'astrologia fu catalizzatore della linguistica come l'alchimia per la chimica. L'Albonese si limitò comunque a pubblicare un alfabeto semi-irriconoscibile, con una nota tuttavia che metteva in relazione quello che chiamiamo copto con i geroglifici (f. 205r).

Guillaume Postel, che viaggiò nel 1543 e portò dei manoscritti a Parigi, derivava le sue idee sulle lingue dall'Albonese, anche se per le disavventure di quest'ultimo poté pubblicare un suo libro con un anno di anticipo,[37] introducendo una supposta parentela fra copto e georgiano.

Le notizie più precise diffuse dai viaggiatori e i relativi manoscritti determinarono una sorta di gara alla pubblicazione di una grammatica copta, che è descritta per esempio da Aufrère. Basterà dire che i promotori furono della Valle a Roma e Peiresc a Parigi, e che vincitore fu Kircher per merito di Peiresc, sebbene la sua grammatica (per la verità un'edizione della *scala* araba) sia stata pubblicata a Roma.[38]

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33 Cfr. Emmel, "Coptic studies before Kircher".

34 P. Terenzio, *Di Ambrogio Teseo degli Albonesi pavese notizie biografiche e linguistiche*, (Pavia: Heredi Bizzoni, 1860).

35 *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam, atque Armenicam, & decem alias linguas… Theseo Ambrosio ex comitibus Albonesii auctore*, ([Pavia]: Ioan. Maria Simoneta, 1539).

36 Ibid., 63.

37 G. Postel, *Linguarum duodecim characterum differentium alphabetum…*, (Parisiis: Dionysius Lescuier, 1538).

38 A. Kircher, *Prodromus coptus sive aegyptiacus…*, (Romae: typis S. Cong. de Propaganda Fide, 1636); Id., *Lingua aegyptiaca restituta; opus tripartitum. Quo linguae coptae sive idiomatis illius primaeui Aegyptiorum pharaonici, vetustate temporum paene collapsi, ex abstrusis Arabum monumentis, plena instauratio continetur…*, (Romae: Hermanni Scheus, 1643).

1636–1790

Il terzo periodo può essere collocato dopo la metà del Seicento, fino a tutto il Settecento, appunto quando iniziò l'attività di Zoëga. Come si è visto, il punto iniziale di questo processo fu la pubblicazione delle grammatiche del Kircher, il cui interesse precipuo fu tuttavia quello del rapporto con i geroglifici e la lingua egiziana. Egli produsse idee del tutto peregrine, che destarono la riprovazione degli altri studiosi, e del resto non fece che stampare quanto gli veniva dalle grammatiche arabe, in particolare la *Scala Magna* di Abu'l Barakat. Ciò non toglie che la sua opera dette il via agli studi correttamente scientifici che seguirono.

Due nomi prestigiosi vanno posti sullo sfondo a precedere, Erasmo, e a ispirare, Montfaucon, quanto si venne producendo (Quatremère). Essi, che furono gli ispiratori del metodo scientifico che si impose fra Sei e Settecento, sottolinearono l'importanza della conoscenza del copto in primo luogo per la filologia in generale, e poi per tutte le altre indagini storiche da essa derivate. Si noti che, proprio a causa della stretta connessione fra i princìpi e i metodi della filologia classica e il concetto di lavoro scientifico in campo umanistico che in quel tempo si era venuto formando, il modello della grammatica copta resterà schiacciato su quello delle lingue classiche, e purtroppo per molti versi lo rimane tuttora. Il modello dovrebbe essere un altro,[39] ma non si può certo rimproverare a quegli studiosi la mancanza di una sensibilità linguistica, che potrà venire solo dopo l'esperienza saussuriana.

A causa del notevole numero di personalità che entrarono in gioco, non mette ormai conto di soffermarsi sui nomi che citeremo, anche perché ben noti, almeno agli specialisti, e su di essi è facile procurarsi notizie; inoltre la cronologia cede il passo per chiarezza di inquadramento alla geografia. Diventa importante la funzione dei grandi centri di studio, che coincidono con le biblioteche-collezioni di manoscritti, anche perché in essi si veniva organizzando un lavoro d'indagine metodico, parallelo allo sviluppo delle Università.

Roma conserva un posto a sé, per le biblioteche (alla Vaticana si aggiunge ora quella della Congregazione *de Propaganda Fide*, che tanta importanza avrà per Zoëga), che durante il Settecento si arricchiranno di un gran numero di manoscritti, ma soprattutto come centro internazionale e generale di studi

39 T. Orlandi, "Towards a computational grammar of Sahidic Coptic", in *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium*, 125–130.

religiosi e come crocevia per la diffusione delle novità. Quivi per esempio il Bonjour redigerà la sua grammatica[40] e opererà Kircher.

Parigi ne diventa la grande rivale, soprattutto per l'azione di Peiresc, che innescherà l'opera di Claude de Saumaise, di Louis Picques, e di Kircher. La Biblioteca Reale (oggi nationale de France) acquisisce anch'essa molti manoscritti, ma solo alla fine dell'Ottocento diventa paragonabile alla Vaticana. Oxford appare a sua volta molto attiva, pur dipendendo all'inizio da studiosi stranieri come David Wilkins (1685–1745) e Charles Woide (1725–1790). Essi faranno scuola agli autoctoni Marshall, Huntington, Askew, ed Edward. Si forma inoltre quello che potremmo chiamare l'asse Frankfurt-Berlin-Copenaghen con Mathurin de Lacroze (1661–1739) e Paul Ernst Jablonski (1693–1757). Leiden rimane importante (Scaliger conclude lì la sua attività) ma i prestigiosi Richard Lepsius e Theodor Petraeus non pubblicarono risultati significativi.

Il lavoro grammaticale del Settecento fu favorito dai codici portati dagli Assemani dal monastero di S. Macario (fra Alessandria e il Cairo) alla Vaticana, e dagli stessi Assemani e altri dal monastero di apa Shenute, in Alto Egitto, in varie biblioteche (Roma, Venezia, Parigi, Oxford, Berlin).

Si cominciarono così a distinguere diverse forme linguistiche, che ricordavano le differenziazioni dialettali del greco classico e il copto entrò nelle discussioni sulla generazione delle lingue. Contemporaneamente si svilupparono gli studi storici, che videro protagoniste le grandi personalità di Johann Vansleben, Eusèbe Renaudot, Giuseppe Assemani.

Le notizie si rincorrono negli epistolari, nelle visite, nelle riviste anche minori ma che vengono attivamente scambiate, negli annunci alle Accademie. Sullo sfondo, ad incoraggiare gli studiosi di diverse tendenze, la rivalità culturale fra la Roma curiale, e poi controriformista, e i centri riformati; la *querelle* intorno alla volgarizzazione della Bibbia e della liturgia; la volontà di riunificare le Chiese orientali con Roma e il superamento delle vecchie eresie; il fascino (culturale: già i Greci . . .) dell'Egitto in particolare nel quadro dell'Oriente; la decifrazione dei geroglifici; la genealogia delle lingue; la computazione dei calendari e la cronologia. La cultura alessandrina e la scuola di Alessandria giocano pochissimo, anche se sono ben note. Evidentemente il rapporto fra cultura greca e copta era troppo problematico.

40 S.H. Aufrère, N. Bosson, "Le Père Guillaume Bonjour (1670–1714). Un orientaliste méconnu porté sur l'étude du copte et le déchiffrement de l'égyptien", *Orientalia* 67 (1998), 497–506; Id., *Guillaume Bonjour*, Elementa linguae copticae.

Concluderemo ricordando i contemporanei e in qualche modo ispiratori di Zoëga, Agostino Giorgi, che potremmo considerare l'iniziatore degli studi di letteratura copta; Luigi Mingarelli, che applica i princìpi della filologia classica ai testi copti; Tommaso Valperga di Caluso, e il danese Jacob Adler.

Zoëga trae da tutti costoro ispirazione per il suo *Catalogus*, che rimarrà il punto centrale per i futuri sviluppi degli studi copti.

CHAPTER 19

Chénouté et Zoëga : l'auteur majeur de la littérature copte révélé par le savant danois

Anne Boud'hors

Lorsque Zoëga, au tout début du XVIII^e^ siècle, entreprit de cataloguer les manuscrits coptes de la collection Borgia,[1] il les divisa conformément aux trois variétés dialectales qui y étaient représentées, le bohaïrique, dialecte du nord de l'Égypte, aujourd'hui langue liturgique de l'Église copte, le fayoumique, appelé par lui « bachmourique », dialecte de l'oasis du Fayoum, et le sahidique, appelé parfois thébain dans la littérature scientifique jusqu'au début du XX^e^ siècle, parce qu'il était supposé être le dialecte du sud. C'est seulement sur les manuscrits sahidiques, principaux témoins de la littérature copte, que porte cet article, et plus précisément encore, sur les manuscrits des œuvres de Chénouté, auteur majeur de cette littérature. Je voudrais montrer ici, sur la base d'exemples précis, le caractère pionnier et fondateur des travaux de Zoëga dans ce domaine.

Un matériau entièrement neuf

Avec les manuscrits sahidiques, Zoëga se trouvait face à des circonstances presque entièrement nouvelles sous trois aspects :

– sur le plan codicologique, un ensemble de plusieurs centaines de cahiers et feuillets de parchemin en désordre, ne comprenant aucun manuscrit complet ; des écritures diverses, dont certaines proches les unes des autres, difficiles à différencier et à dater en l'absence d'éléments de comparaison.

1 G. Zoëga, *Catalogus codicum Copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur*, (Romae : typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1810), réimpr. avec une introduction historique et des notes bibliographiques par J.-M. Sauget (Hildesheim – New York : Georg Olms Verlag, 1973).

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– sur le plan linguistique, une variété de copte encore très mal attestée à son époque,[2] alors qu'elle est devenue aujourd'hui l'objet d'étude principal des coptisants.
– sur le plan littéraire, un grand nombre d'auteurs et d'œuvres encore inconnus.

Dans ces conditions difficiles, les résultats obtenus forcent l'admiration, le plus spectaculaire étant l'identification d'environ trente-cinq manuscrits attribuables à un même auteur, Chénouté, jusque-là totalement inconnu,[3] aujourd'hui reconnu comme l'auteur copte par excellence, dont la syntaxe d'une très grande difficulté atteint probablement le plus haut degré de sophistication dans cette langue. Il était le supérieur d'une grande congrégation monastique en Haute Égypte, dont le centre est appelé 'monastère de Chénouté' ou 'monastère Blanc'. Sa vie et son œuvre se situent dans la seconde moitié du IVe siècle et la première partie du Ve.

Zoëga et les savants de son époque

Il faut souligner à quel point les compétences de Zoëga combinaient celles de plusieurs savants de son époque.

Le seul à avoir apprécié correctement qui était Chénouté à la même période que le savant danois était Étienne Quatremère, sur la base d'un matériel textuel différent,[4] mais il ne semble pas y avoir eu de relation entre les deux savants, si l'on en croit la correspondance de Zoëga.

En 1811, Jean-François Champollion publia du catalogue de Zoëga un compte rendu détaillé et très élogieux,[5] en soulignant son importance pour l'étude de la langue égyptienne :

2 La majorité des manuscrits connus à l'époque étaient en bohaïrique : ils avaient été rapportés par divers voyageurs et savants depuis le XVIIe siècle. La langue sahidique s'était éteinte, les manuscrits écrits dans cette langue n'avaient pas encore été découverts. Ils le furent à partir de la fin du XIXe siècle et sont aujourd'hui très nombreux.

3 Cf. S. Emmel *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, I, (Leuven : Peeters, 2004), 14–18.

4 Cf. Emmel, *Shenoute*, I, 18.

5 J.-F. Champollion, *Observations sur le catalogue des manuscrits coptes du musée Borgia à Velletri, ouvrage posthume de George Zoega*, (Paris : Imprimerie J.B. Sajou, 1811), extrait du *Magasin Encyclopédique* d'octobre 1811.

> Dans le nombre des matériaux qui peuvent conduire à une connaissance approfondie de la langue égyptienne, connaissance qui doit être, en quelque sorte, le fondement premier et indispensable de toute recherche sur l'Égypte ancienne, on doit compter surtout les manuscrits thébains que Zoëga a publiés dans son utile et savant ouvrage.[6]
>
> Aucun autre ouvrage n'offre une réunion aussi variée de textes de tous les genres et de tous les dialectes. Celui-ci ne peut point même être étranger aux savants qui ne s'occupent pas de l'étude des langues : les historiens y puiseront des documents aussi nombreux que sûrs pour l'histoire ecclésiastique de l'Orient, et le petit nombre de ceux qui cultivent la langue égyptienne retireront sans contredit de son étude les plus grands fruits : c'est pour eux qu'il est fait.[7]

Il ressort de ce compte rendu que Champollion était davantage intéressé par la langue que par la littérature. Il expose néanmoins la répartition faite par Zoëga des manuscrits (sahidiques) en différents genres littéraires, selon une division qui deviendra traditionnelle et qui commence à peine à être remise en cause.[8] Dans cette présentation, Chénouté n'est cité par Champollion qu'en passant, parmi les 'lettres monastiques',[9] sans que lui soit attribuée une place particulière.[10]

Pour l'aspect codicologique, le fait que des parties des mêmes livres arrivaient en Europe à des époques et par des voies différentes avait été remarqué dès le début par Giovanni Mingarelli et Agostino Giorgi, avec qui Zoëga était en relation.[11] Le premier étudiait les manuscrits appartenant au vénitien Giacomo Nani, le second travaillait aussi sur la collection Borgia. Cependant, personne ne connaissait la provenance de ces manuscrits.[12] C'est seulement

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6 Champollion, *Observations*, 27.

7 Champollion, *Observations*, 36.

8 Notamment grâce aux travaux de Tito Orlandi, dont les articles tendent à donner de la littérature copte une vision plus historique et dynamique : voir par exemple T. Orlandi, « Literature, Coptic », in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, v, edited by A.S. Atiya, (New York : Macmillan, 1991), 1450–1460.

9 Sans doute à cause du titre *epistolè* que portent plusieurs des sermons de Chénouté.

10 Champollion insiste sur deux manuscrits : 1) un fragment d'un manuscrit médical (Z 278), consacré aux maladies de peau ; 2) un poème spirituel en vers dont l'auteur est un moine (Z 312 : il s'agit du poème intitulé *Triadon*).

11 Cf. Emmel, *Shenoute*, 1, 23.

12 Zoëga, *Catalogus*, 169 : « *Quibus Aegypti locis quibusve in bibliothecis olim adservati fuerint codices, quorum fragmenta nunc sunt in museo Borgiano, plane ignoratur, siquidem*

dans les années 1880 que l'égyptologue français Gaston Maspero découvrit la 'cachette' où les restes de la bibliothèque du monastère Blanc avaient été déposés plus de six siècles auparavant.[13]

Zoëga fondateur de la recherche moderne sur Chénouté

Tout au long du XX^e^ siècle et jusqu'à aujourd'hui, de nombreuses œuvres de Chénouté ont été publiées. Par ailleurs, les chercheurs se sont consacrés surtout à deux aspects du dossier : la reconstruction des manuscrits de Chénouté et la langue de ses œuvres. Or si l'on considère les travaux majeurs dans ces domaines, on reconnaît sans peine qu'ils ont pour point de départ le catalogue de Zoëga.

Codicologie

« Zoëga had as a part of his task to sort Borgia's White Monastery fragments codicologically, a project that he accomplished with an admirable degree of success ».[14]

Le principal accomplissement de Zoëga fut en effet l'identification de ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui 'unités codicologiques', c'est-à-dire, d'ensembles de feuillets appartenant à un même livre. Parfois ces feuillets étaient encore solidaires, mais dans d'autres cas ils étaient détachés. Pour arriver à ce résultat, il fallait combiner des critères paléographiques et codicologiques (écriture, pagination, signatures de cahiers) et des critères de contenu, parfois directs (titres, mention de l'auteur), parfois indirects (sujets traités et style). Comme il a été dit, trente-cinq de ces unités furent attribuées par Zoëga à Chénouté.

Plus d'un siècle après Zoëga, Johannes Leipoldt poursuivit la tâche en ajoutant aux unités codicologiques de la collection Borgia des feuillets nouvellement découverts. Il put aussi proposer un degré de classement supplémentaire, à savoir le titre de l'œuvre, attribué par lui en fonction du sujet.[15] Un progrès

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membranae istae a missionariis in superiori Aegypto degentibus pretio Arabibus solute sunt comparatae, et ad Eminentissimum musei conditorem transmissae ».

13 Sur cette découverte et la dispersion qui s'ensuivit, cf. Emmel, *Shenoute*, I, 18–24.

14 Emmel, *Shenoute*, I, 23.

15 J. Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et opera omnia*, III–IV, (Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1908 et 1913).

décisif fut finalement accompli par Stephen Emmel.[16] qui mit en lumière l'organisation du corpus des œuvres de Chénouté en neuf tomes de *Canons* (sermons de discipline monastique) et huit tomes de *Discours* (œuvres morales et pastorales), et parvint à reconstruire plus de cent *codices*. Aujourd'hui, on peut replacer chaque fragment dans une œuvre, un recueil, un manuscrit. Voici un exemple de cette progression :[17]

1. Z(oëga) 198 [IB.5.05–12] : 8 feuillets consécutifs. « *Fragmentum sermonis sive epistolae qua auctor, quem omnino Scjenutium esse reor* (…) ».
2. Leipoldt, *Sinuthii III*, n° 40 :
   – identifie trente-cinq feuillets du même manuscrit conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale à Paris.
   – donne un nom à l'œuvre : *De eis qui e monasterio discesserunt*.
   – identifie des fragments de deux autres manuscrits contenant la même œuvre, conservés à Oxford et Paris.
3. D'autres fragments du même manuscrit Z 198 conservés dans diverses collections sont publiés, sans que soit toujours reconnue leur appartenance à ce manuscrit.
4. Emmel, *Shenoute*, établit que :
   – Z 198 est une partie du codex MONB.BZ.[18]
   – 83 feuillets du codex BZ sont conservés, sur un total d'au moins 172 à l'origine.
   – Le codex BZ est un témoin du *Canon* 4 de Chénouté, qui est attesté par trois manuscrits.
   – Z 198 est une partie de la première « lettre » du *Canon* 4.

L'examen de quelques chiffres permet de mesurer l'importance et la solidité des fondements posés par Zoëga :

16 Emmel, *Shenoute*, I–II.

17 Je continue à désigner les manuscrits sous leur sigle « Z(oëga) », tout en donnant entre crochets leur cote actuelle à la Biblioteca Nazionale de Naples conformément au nouveau catalogue de P. Buzi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti Borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca Nazionale « Vittorio Emanuele III » di Napoli*, Accademia dei Lincei Classe di scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche – Memorie, Serie IX, Volume XXV, Fascicolo 1, (Roma : Scienze e Lettere, 2009).

18 Sigle que porte le manuscrit dans la base *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* élaborée par T. Orlandi (http://cmcl.let.uniroma1.it/), où "MONB" signifie "Monastero Bianco", tandis que les deux lettres qui suivent ont été attribuées arbitrairement.

– S. Emmel a recensé un peu plus de cent manuscrits transmettant les œuvres de Chénouté.
– Zoëga avait attribué de manière assez nette trente-trois unités codicologiques à Chénouté, qui vont d'un feuillet pour la plus petite à trente-sept pour la plus grande. Une seule s'est révélée fausse (Z 209* [IB.07.22–23] : catéchèse d'Horsièse).
– Cinq unités pour lesquelles Zoëga avait suggéré prudemment une attribution à Chénouté ont été rendues à d'autres auteurs :[19] Besa (successeur de Chénouté à la tête du monastère et auteur de sermons de discipline monastique dont les thèmes sont proches de ceux de son prédécesseur), Athanase d'Alexandrie, Athanase d'Antioche, Grégoire de Nysse. Pour différentes raisons, aucune de ces erreurs n'est grossière, mais au contraire explicable par le contenu des textes. En revanche la dernière (Z 302 [IB.15.39–42]), pour laquelle le texte est en fait Heb 11,12–13,18, est surprenante. On a du mal à imaginer que Zoëga n'ait pas identifié un passage biblique aussi long. Peut-être a-t-il simplement manqué de temps.
– S. Emmel a pu identifier dans la collection Borgia conservée à Naples seize unités codicologiques supplémentaires transmettant les œuvres de Chénouté (parfois des feuillets se rattachant à des manuscrits déjà identifiés par Zoëga comme chénoutiens). Ainsi la collection de Naples conserve des témoins de presque la moitié des œuvres de Chénouté.

En ce qui concerne le contenu, la présentation des textes de Chénouté dans le catalogue de Zoëga est d'une richesse et d'une intelligence exemplaires : les notices comprennent un résumé du contenu, l'édition de larges extraits, parfois l'édition complète des feuillets, une traduction complète ou partielle en latin, et d'abondantes notes explicatives. Par exemple, Z 186 (dont nous savons aujourd'hui que c'est un passage du *Canon* 6) est présenté ainsi :

> *Epistola conciliatoria et exhortatoria Scjenutii ad congregationem austeritate sua afflictam et turbatam, cui subjecti sunt threni ejusdem. Primum fragmentum totum hic sistimus, e reliquis autem quae vel argumenti vel lingua gratia excerper visum est*.

19 Emmel, *Shenoute*, II, 896–897, donne une liste de dix attributions abusives à Chénouté parmi les manuscrits de Naples. Seules six d'entre elles ont Zoëga comme source, dont celle rendue à Horsièse (Z 209*). Il y a aussi deux attributions qui restent incertaines (cf. Emmel, *Shenoute*, II, 906 : Z 190, f. 1 et Z 306 ff., 1–2), dont seule la première avait été donnée par Zoëga.

Des deux fragments regroupés sous ce numéro, Zoëga choisit donc de publier entièrement le premier et de donner des extraits du second, en fonction du contenu ou de la langue. Puis il donne la traduction intégrale en latin. Son résumé du sujet du sermon est d'une admirable justesse : de fait, les lettres de Chénouté à sa congrégation, contenues dans les *Canons*, sont pleines de reproches, et même de malédictions. Certaines sont profondément inspirées des *Lamentations* (*threni*) du prophète Jérémie. L'argumentation y est souvent pauvre et répétitive, mais la complexité linguistique et la rhétorique mise en œuvre toujours passionnantes à étudier.

Aspects linguistiques

L'acuité de certaines notes de Zoëga, à une époque où dictionnaires et grammaires n'existaient pas, est à souligner. Elle est bien illustrée par l'exemple suivant :

Z 188, note 7,[20] à propos du passage ⲁⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ ϣⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲁϩⲏⲧⲛ ϣⲟⲟⲩⲉ (« notre cœur s'est desséché, nos entrailles se sont desséchées ») :

> *Difficile interdum est distinguere* ϩⲏⲧ *utrum referendum sit ad M.* ϩⲏⲧ *cor an ad M.* ϧⲏⲧ *venter. Ab origine quidem unum tantum vocabulum fuisse reor, quo denotabantur viscera, interiora. Hic* ⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ *ni fallor pertinet ad M.* ϩⲏⲧ, *alterum* ϩⲏⲧⲛ *et infra* ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ *ad M.* ϧⲏⲧ. *Cod.* CCII *p. 131* ⲡⲁϩⲏⲧ ⲙⲛ ϩⲏⲧ *cor et viscera mea.*
>
> (traduction : « Il est parfois difficile de décider si ϩⲏⲧ doit être rattaché à M(emphitique)[21] ϩⲏⲧ *cœur* ou à M. ϧⲏⲧ *ventre*. Je pense qu'à l'origine il y avait un seul mot, qui désignait les *viscères*, les *entrailles*. Ici ⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ, si je ne me trompe pas, se rapporte à M. ϩⲏⲧ, tandis que ϩⲏⲧⲛ et ci-dessous ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ (se rapportent) à M. ϧⲏⲧ. Cod. CCII p. 131 ⲡⲁϩⲏⲧ ⲙⲛ ϩⲏⲧ *mon cœur et mes entrailles* ».)

L'explication de Zoëga est encore une fois étonnamment juste, compte tenu de l'état des connaissances de son temps. Aujourd'hui on peut expliquer cette homonymie sur la base de l'égyptien hiéroglyphique et constater qu'il y avait en fait deux mots :

20 Zoëga, *Catalogus*, 417.

21 Autre nom du dialecte bohaïrique.

– ϩнт (Sah, Boh) < eg. *ḥ.3.t-y*, « cœur » → па-ϩнт = « mon- cœur »
– ϩн (Sah, état absolu), ϩнтⲉ (Sah)/ ⲃнтⲉ (Boh), avant suffixe possessif.
< eg. *ḥ3.t*, « ventre » → ϩнт = simplification de ϩнтⲉⲧ = « ventre de moi ».

À son époque, et sans connaître l'égyptien ancien,[22] Zoëga était en mesure de donner une traduction exacte et de la justifier. Il comprenait également que cette homonymie servait à merveille la rhétorique de Chénouté, dans sa dimension poétique. Le jeu phonique sur « cœur » et « entrailles » en copte avait d'ailleurs déjà été utilisé par le traducteur des *Lamentations de Jérémie* (1,20).

D'une manière générale, la sensibilité de Zoëga au style de Chénouté, la pertinence et la modernité de ses jugements ont été bien relevées par S. Emmel.[23] Il vaut la peine de citer quelques-unes des formules d'appréciation qui accompagnent la description des manuscrits :

– Z 187 [1B.03.36–41] : « *Fragmentum epistolae ad eandem congregationem, quam Scjenutii esse et res et stylus suadent* ».
– Z 197 [1B.05.01, 02–03, 04] : « *Fragmentum declamationis contra fanaticum, quam ut a Scjenutio profectam credam, omnia suadent* ».
– Z 199 [1B.05.13–16] : « *Fragmentum sermonis quem Scjenutii esse ex argumento ejus colligo, quamquam stylus placidior sit quam is quo uti solet Scjenutius* ».
Dans cette dernière remarque, Zoëga identifie un style « plus calme » que le style habituel de Chénouté. Je reviendrai sur ce point, qui n'est pas le moins intéressant. À ce stade on pourrait objecter – certains savants l'ont fait à juste titre – que ce concept de « style » est subjectif et conduit à des erreurs d'identification. Cependant, force est de constater que ces erreurs ont été très rares dans le *Catalogus* de Zoëga. C'est que ses identifications ne sont pas intuitives, elles sont basées sur certaines observations objectives, parmi lesquelles l'attention au lexique. J'en prendrai deux exemples.
– Dans Z 186 [1B.03.01–06, 07–31, 32–35], Zoëga repère une formule caractéristique, ⲛⲉϫⲁⲝⲉ ⲉⲧϩⲛ ⲛϫⲱⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲥϩⲓ ⲛⲁⲛ (« les paroles qui sont dans les livres écrits pour nous »), à propos de laquelle il remarque en note :[24] « *Intelligo haec, et quae p. 214 dicuntur* ⲛⲉϫⲁⲝⲉ ⲉⲧⲥϩⲓ ⲛⲁⲛ, *de regula ordinis, quam a singulis subscriptam et jurejurando firmatam narrat auctor vitae*

22 Rappelons que la clé de l'écriture et de la langue égyptienne ne sera donnée par Champollion qu'environ trente ans plus tard.

23 Emmel, *Shenoute*, I, 24, notes 64 et 65, où les jugements de Zoëga sont opposés à ceux, moins lucides, d'autres savants contemporains ou postérieurs.

24 *Catalogus*, 389, note 38.

Psjol cod. CLXXXI supra p. 375 ». Il suggère donc que cette formule renvoie à la première règle du monastère, établie par Pgol (oncle de Chénouté), et que les moines devaient s'engager par serment à respecter. Ce fait est désormais bien établi par divers travaux et notamment la reconstruction d'un corpus des règles de Chénouté par Bentley Layton.[25]

– Dans le même manuscrit, Zoëga porte attention à une expression qui lui semble inhabituelle et qui se retrouve dans plusieurs manuscrits attribués à Chénouté :[26] « *ⲧⲱⲉⲧⲱ age, attende, adverte animum, ter legitur cod. CLXXXIX p. 308* (…)*, p. 388* (…)*, et p. 252* (…)*. Etiam cod. CXCIV p. 60* (…)*. Cod. CC p. 418* (…) ». Plus de deux cents ans plus tard, le *Coptic Dictionary* de Walter E. Crum confirmait la pertinence de cette remarque :[27] « (Shenoute only) preposit phrase as interj (?), meaning doubtful (…) ».

Finissons par un des passages où la perspicacité de Zoëga est particulièrement remarquable :

Z 246 [IB.11.01–37, 38, 39, 40–41, 42] :

> *At ubi denuo attentiusque perlegi, tot in eo inveni quae Scjenutii indolem redolent ut hujus esse vix amplius dubitem ; quamquam suspicer fore qui ex ipsa illa quae est scriptionis genuina elegantia codicem exaratum arguant ante aevum Scjenutii. Stylus quidem pedestris est et humilis, et liber pauca si exceperis lectu facilis, secus ac sunt fervidae illae declamations et epistolae illae Scjenutii parabolis et paradigmis refertae et sententiarum emphatica inversione haud raro subobscurae : sed nec desunt scripta quae Scjenutii nomen prae se ferunt stylo plano atque fluido digesta. In excerptis dabimus quae maxime faciunt ad judicium ferendum de auctore.*[28]

L'impression générale de Zoëga est que ce passage contient tant de traits caractéristiques du talent de Chénouté qu'il est enclin à le lui attribuer. Il expose néanmoins deux objections possibles :

L'âge du manuscrit : Zoëga suggère que le manuscrit pourrait remonter à une période antérieure à Chénouté. Nous savons aujourd'hui que ce n'est pas le cas, car les manuscrits de ce type, désormais nombreux, ne sont

25 B. Layton, « Some Observations on Shenoute's Sources : Who Are Our Fathers ? », *Journal of Coptic Studies* 11 (2009), 45–59 : 51–52.

26 *Catalogus*, 395, note 75.

27 W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1939), 396b–397a.

28 Zoëga, *Catalogus*, 588.

probablement pas antérieurs au VI^e siècle. Cependant, il semble bien faire partie des plus anciens manuscrits du monastère Blanc actuellement conservés.[29] Ainsi, en termes de chronologie relative, l'impression de Zoëga quant à l'antiquité de ce manuscrit était juste.

5. Le style est plus prosaïque et humble que d'habitude. Cette remarque conduit Zoëga à une description suggestive du 'grand style' de Chénouté : déclamatoire, plein de paraboles et de métaphores, et non dépourvu d'obscurité.

Finalement Zoëga écarte la seconde objection, parce que ce style moins brillant se rencontre aussi dans des œuvres explicitement attribuées à Chénouté.

De fait, grâce une connaissance plus détaillée des œuvres de Chénouté, on peut trouver diverses explications à ces variations de style. L'une est liée au genre de l'œuvre. De manière générale, et qui demanderait certainement à être nuancée, les *Discours* ne sont pas aussi difficiles à comprendre que les *Canons*. Écrits pour un public non monastique, soumis dans une certaine mesure à la nécessité de convaincre, ils contiennent souvent des développements mieux structurés et argumentés. Une autre explication est liée à la rhétorique elle-même : les variations de styles, les ruptures de ton, les changements de registre sont des instruments de l'art oratoire que Chénouté maîtrisait parfaitement. Même l'obscurité pouvait être un outil rhétorique chez lui. Les travaux d'Ariel Shisha-Halevy, qui ont mis cela en lumière d'un point de vue structuraliste, confirment pleinement les intuitions de Zoëga.[30]

Il apparaît donc incontestable que le travail de Zoëga a constitué un véritable trésor, grâce auquel se sont construits les travaux de plusieurs générations de savants jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Des progrès majeurs ont été accomplis depuis lors, dans la reconstruction de la littérature copte et en particulier des œuvres de Chénouté. Pourtant la tâche à accomplir reste immense, tant dans la reconstitution des manuscrits que dans l'identification des textes et des auteurs, pour arriver à une image satisfaisante de cette littérature. Dans cette perspective, deux siècles après sa publication, la fréquentation du *Catalogus*, toujours susceptible de fournir de précieuses informations, reste indispensable.

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29 Ce manuscrit porte le sigle MONB.XE dans le CMCL (cf. *supra*).

30 A. Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Categories. Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic*, (Roma : Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1986); Id., « Rhetorical Narratives : Notes on Narrative Poetics in Shenoutean Sahidic Coptic », in *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East : Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, edited by F. Hagen *et al.*, (Leuven : Peeters, 2011), 451–498.

CHAPTER 20

The *Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Velitris adservantur.* Genesis of a masterpiece

Paola Buzi

There is no doubt that the *Catalogus codicum copticorum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Velitris adservantur* (1810)[1] represents one of the most important scientific efforts of Georg Zoëga and there is no Coptologist who would not consider it a real milestone in the history of Coptic literature, codicology and even paleography. The circumstances of its creation, the dramatic practical choices which are behind it and the complex scientific *iter* which brought its author to such a revolutionary and determinant classification of Coptic literature are however unknown to most scholars.

With the help of the materials preserved in The Royal Library of Copenhagen, the complete correspondence of Zoëga recently published by Karen Ascani and the letters sent by Zoëga's patron, Cardinal Stefano Borgia,[2] to other scholars and collaborators—mainly, but not exclusively, preserved in the Vatican Library—, we will try to describe in detail the genesis of this masterpiece, in order to better understand its value.

When Zoëga set about realizing his catalogue of the Borgia Coptic manuscripts, he could count only on one example of such an enterprise, although this was an extremely valid one: the *Ægyptiorum codicum reliquiæ Venetiis in bibliotheca Naniana asseruatæ* by Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli,[3] the well-known

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* Zoëga's correspondence is cited after Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013).

1 The *Catalogus* was reprinted twice, the first time in 1903 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich) while the second, edited by J.-M. Sauget, in 1973 (Hildesheim – New York: Georg Holms Verlag).

2 Concerning the life of Stefano Borgia see P. Buzi *Catalogo dei manoscritti copti Borgiani conservati presso la Biblioteca "Vittorio Emanuele III" di Napoli, con un profilo scientifico del cardinale Stefano Borgia e Georg Zoega*, Accademia dei Lincei Classe di scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche—Memorie, Serie IX, Volume XXV, Fascicolo 1, (Roma: Scienze e lettere, 2009), with wide bibliography.

3 For Mingarelli's catalogue, published in Bologna in 1785, see P. Buzi, "Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli e il 'primo tentennare per vie nuove'. Gli studi copti a Bologna e in Italia nella seconda metà

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specialist of Old Greek with whom Zoëga was in contact by letter and whom he had visited for two or three weeks in July 1785.[4] The Bolognese abbot was quite rightly considered by the Danish scholar the most trustworthy and refined philologist, with whom the other contemporaneous Coptologists—Rafael Tūki, Carl Gottfried Woide, Agostino Giorgi, Tommaso Valperga di Caluso—could not compete.

Like Mingarelli, Zoëga had not planned to study Coptic—a language that he describes in a letter to his brother Wilhadus, dated 1786, as "vielleicht unter allen alfabetischen Sprachen die schwerste"[5]—, and he had certainly never considered writing a catalogue. It was Stefano Borgia to change the course of his destiny.

As is well known, the Secretary and later Prefect of the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, since the '70s, had started to collect what was, at that time, the richest collection of Coptic manuscripts in Europe. Being a learned and curious man, and knowing some Coptic himself, he therefore pushed his Danish collaborators—at first Jacob Georg Christian Adler and Friedrich Münter, and later Zoëga—to dedicate most of their efforts to the study of the language of Christian Egypt.

Although initially reluctant, mainly because he was busy with several other projects, Zoëga started to "studiare seriamente il copto"—to use his words—in 1789, collecting all the available Coptic publications and regularly contacting all those who could help him to learn Coptic, Mingarelli *in primis*.

His progress turned out to be very fast,[6] to the point that, in April of the same year, he was able to announce himself ready to work with the Vatican Coptic fragments, to have elaborated a theory concerning the most ancient Coptic dialect (contradicting Giorgi's hypothesis, according to which the Bohairic/*Memphiticus* dialect was earlier than the Sahidic one), and to have planned a Coptic dictionary ("un dizionario combinato di tutti i dialetti"),[7] which however he never realized:[8]

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del XVIII secolo e la nuova stagione dei caratteri tipografici copti", in *Aegyptiaca et Coptica. Studi in onore di Sergio Pernigotti*, a cura di P. Buzi, D. Picchi, M. Zecchi, (Oxford: Archeopress, 2011), 33–57.

4 Letters nn. 397, 422, 425, 457, 644.

5 Letter n. 290.

6 Letters nn. 384, 422, 457. Th. F. Hill sent to him Woide's Grammar and Dictionary (letter n. 574).

7 Letter n. 718.

8 Letter n. 381. Also Mingarelli had planned to write a Coptic dictionary, as is deducible from a letter sent to him by Zoëga, and, above all, from the notes preserved in the University Library of Bologna. See Buzi, *Mingarelli*, 37–38.

> Col principio di [quest'a]nno ho comminciato a studiare seriamente il Copto, e sto adesso adoprando i codici Vaticani di questa lingu[a. ci] sono dei tesori in questo genere alla Vaticana, e io trovo tutta la facilità per adoprarli. (…) Se troverò ozio, penso di fare un dizionario *utriusque dialecti*, riducendo le parole a radicali senza vocali. credo che questa sia l'unica strada per ricondurla alla sua originalità, e per mezzo di essa ritrovare l'alfabeto ieratico, locchè deve contribuire a facilitare il progresso a una certa intelligenza dei geroglifici. (…) Giorgi crede il Menfitico il piu antico, il piu vero Egizio. io propendo al contrario parere. la scarsezza dei vocali adoprati, l'abondanza di monasillabi, l'indeterminato nell'uso delle particole, e la durezza della costruzione nel dialetto Tebaico, mi sembrano contrabilanciare le ragioni portate da Giorgi in favore dell'altro dialetto, sopra cui pare che gia di buonora abbia influito il commercio coi Greci. Ma non ho ancora abbastanza appurate queste cose.

It is only in 1790, however, that Borgia's desire to see his collection catalogued became concrete, despite the on-going resistance of the Danish scholar, who in a letter dated 8 May 1790 opened his heart to the trustworthy Münter, confessing his worries, but at the same time he allowed it to be known that he already had an idea of how to set up the work and catalogue the fragments:[9]

> Pensa [*scil.* il Cardinale] ancora di pubblicare tutti i suoi frammenti Copti, e qui non so come uscire senza prestarmici. Non gliene fate menzione nelle Vostre lettere. Se vuole differire la cosa sino all'anno venturo ed allora eseguirla a modo mio, può essere che mene incarico.

As Zoëga himself will clarify years later in the *Praefatio* of the *Catalogus*,[10] in Borgia's plans, the catalogue was meant to integrate the edition of the Coptic texts already published by Giorgi[11] and Münter.[12] Despite their undeniable merits, however, the two scholars were far from understanding the role of the texts they had edited within the development of the Coptic literature and, although important, their contributions cannot be considered memorable.

9 Letter n. 466.

10 Zoëga, *Catalogus*, v.

11 A.A. Giorgi, *Fragmentum Evangelii S. Iohannis Graeco-Copto-Thebaicum Saeculi IV…*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1789); Id., *De miraculis Sancti Coluthi et reliquiis Actorum Sancti Panesniv martyrum*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1793).

12 F. Münter, *Specimen Versionum Danielis Copticarum*, (Romae: apud Antonium Fulgonium, 1786).

Zoëga's approach, on the other hand, was much more conscious and systematic. He immediately perceived, for instance, the importance of the Sahidic manuscripts and soon concentrated his attention on them.

When he got down to the task seriously, however, he became well aware to have two main problems: 1) Borgia's Sahidic collection was in progressive expansion, a fact which caused continuous revisions of its classification;[13] moreover 2) on the basis of a palaeographic and codicologic analysis—both used for the first time in such a detailed way—groups of leaves turned out to belong to the same codex, therefore a correct description could not be possible without having first identified the codicological unit(y) they belonged to.

Zoëga's notes and letters shed light on the frequent rethinking ("*repetita revisione*", he will write in the *Catalogus*), the profound frustrations and the brilliant intuitions which are behind the consciousness of the above mentioned problems.

We learn, for instance, that he did not plan to do all the work by himself. The palaeographic analysis had been entrusted to Wolf Frederik Engelbreth, who would take advantage of a first approximate description made by Zoëga. Engelbreth, however, never carried out that task. The palaeographic descriptions—according to a classification in six *classes*—as well as the *specimina* inserted at the end of the *Catalogus* were made by Zoëga, who prepared them by means of laying translucent paper over each selected manuscript page and tracing the letters of a selected passage of text.[14]

We also learn that for the whole period in which he worked on the catalogue, Zoëga waited, in vain, for a young scholar whom Münter had promised to send from Denmark to help him in the task of translating the Sahidic texts. This long-desired collaborator never arrived:[15]

> [*scil.* A Münter] toccherebbe di proccurare che dalla patria nostra un letterato s'inviasse a Roma col solo scopo di studiare la lingua copta, per trarre dai codici e frammenti qui esistenti tutto il profitto che promettono, servendosi non solamente delle Membrane Borgiane, delle quali ancora la più gran parte, la quale non contiene libri biblici, resta totalmente trascurata, ma ancora di quella della Vaticana, che una volta io cominciai a consultare, ma poco dopo dovetti interrompere il lavoro.

13 Letter n. 996.

14 Letter n. 751. On the *specimina* of the scripts provided in the catalogue, see letter n. 782.

15 Letters nn. 688, 720.

Zoëga's work proceeded without interruption even during the first part of the French occupation of the "Repubblica Romana" (1798–1799) and the brief imprisonment of Borgia, who, during his forced stay in Civitavecchia, continued to send to Zoëga from Velletri Coptic fragments by his collaborator Vincenzo.[16]

In July 1798 much of the catalogue had been completed and already comprised several texts given *in extenso*. It is extremely interesting to note that Zoëga, being the first to understand his historical and literary value, included among the others all those regarding Shenoute:[17]

> Intanto ho ampliato il piano del mio, e penso col tempo di dare una serie di fasciculi Coptici, per i quali già tengo una quantità di frammenti copiati, fragli altri tutti quelli che riguardano Scenute, (. . .). Dei rimanenti mi contenterò di dare soltanto degli eccerti.
>
> Spero che dentro quest'inverno futuro verrà a Roma qualche letterato oltramontano, pratico del commercio librario, con cui combinare la maniera d'effettuarne la stampa per mezzo d'associazione, giacchè per quanto cercherei di ristringerne il volume, pure la spesa sempre sarebbe considerabile. (. . .) Mi sono lusingato che Münter avrebbe mandato un suo scolare già un poco istruito in questa lingua per assistermi nell'intrapresa, ma non ne vedo alcun effetto.

Unfortunately, in 1799 the political situation precipitated, strongly influencing the cultural life of Rome. The Fulgoni publishing house, specialized in Oriental books, was closed and the Coptic typographical characters were confiscated. Only at the end of the French occupation and after Borgia's return, could Zoëga start his work again,[18] although some new problems appeared in that period, such as the fund raising for printing the volume.[19]

In 1803 the catalogue was almost ready and the Danish Coptologist could start describing its structure in the introductions to the three sections that made up the *Catalogus*.[20]

16 Letter n. 746. See also letters nn. 747 and 751, in which the Cardinal approves the structure of the catalogue.

17 Letter n. 763a.

18 Letter n. 788.

19 Letters nn. 894 and 975.

20 The introductions prepared by Zoëga were originally longer than those published in the printed version of *Catalogus*. For the provenance of the Borgia manuscripts see

He subdivided the fragments into three categories according to their language. There were therefore the *Memphitici* or Bohairic fragments (I–LXXXII), from Deir abu Maqar, in the Wadi el-Natrun,[21] the *Basmyrici* or Fayyumic fragments (I–III)[22] and the Sahidic fragments (I–CCCXII), from the White Monastery of Shenoute, in Sohag.[23] In each language Zoëga operated a further subdivision according to the literary genre.[24] It is important to stress, however, that the Bohairic manuscripts were mainly copies of those kept in the Vatican Library brought to Rome by Raphael Tūki.

For each manuscript—or better, part of a manuscript—Zoëga indicated the number of remaining leaves (with their original pagination), described the script and mentioned the contents. Moreover he transcribed the possible titles and colophons. As already mentioned, the transcription of long excerpts is extremely frequent, especially of those written by Shenoute, whose central role in Coptic literature Zoëga had clearly understood.

On several occasions he confessed to have started from the Biblical fragments in Bohairic dialect, because they were the easiest to identify and interpret. Then he continued with the liturgical and patristic fragments in the same dialect, to move only later to his main interest: the Sahidic homilies and lives.

The above mentioned personal notes of Zoëga related to the catalogue and preserved in The Royal Library of Copenhagen are particularly valuable for an in-depth analysis of the long and complex genesis of the Sahidic section of the *Catalogus* and its several preliminary phases.

The papers in question are preserved in two cardboard boxes,[25] the first of which contains only the manuscript of the final version of the catalogue, probably dated 1805. From the frequent corrections, the marginal notes used to change previous sentences (for example "NUM I, NUM II e così Avanti", instead of the original "Num. 1, Num. 2, etc."), the additions (for example "Nota al cod. 312") and some inconsistencies (for example the "NUM CLXXXII" of the

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T. Orlandi, "Un project milanais concernant le manuscrits coptes du Monastère Blanc", *Le Muséon* 85 (1972), 403–413; Zoëga, *Catalogus*, 169.

21 Zoëga, *Catalogus*, 1.

22 Ibid., 139.

23 Ibid., 169.

24 The few exceptions to this rule are mentioned by Zoëga in *Catalogus*, VII–XII. "Memfitici 83, Basmirici 3, Sahidici 325, assieme 411". See letter n. 1121.

25 1) NKS 357b, fol., I, 1: *Authographum auctoris operis inscripti: Catalogus codicum mss. qui in Museo Borgiano in Velitris adservantur Romae 1810* (581 ff. numbered on the *recto*); 2) NKS 357b, fol., I, 2: *Collectanea et excerpta ad catalogum cod. copticorum pertinentia* (381 ff. + 65 ff. numbered on the *recto* + some leaves *sine numero*, subdivided in 2 subfolders).

Catalogus is the "NUM CLXXXIII" of the Copenhagen manuscript, etc.), we can deduce that the revision of the entire work was still *in fieri*.[26]

However what is more fascinating is the fact that it is possible to follow exactly how Zoëga proceeded in his work: after having identified the content of the leaves and collected the related fragments, the scholar arranged a brief physical description, then inserted the transcription and the Latin translation of the entire text or of that part he considered particularly interesting. On a separate sheet he noted his remarks that, at the moment of printing, would become footnotes.

Clarity and tidiness in the layout and in the formulation are impressive, obviously representing the result of several preliminary stages of the work, as is also demonstrated by the materials preserved in the second cardboard box, which contains two subfolders,[27] the first of which includes, among the other documents,[28] the *Codices coptici chartacei*, a very detailed table of contents of the Sahidic section, with attached descriptions, transcriptions and translations which are much longer than those eventually included in the printed version of the *Catalogus*. This manuscript, which can be considered the most recent pre-printed version of the *Catalogus* and was very likely compiled between the 1798 and 1803, is currently studied by Stephen Emmel.

In a long letter written on 4th December 1802 to his friend Münter,[29] Zoëga criticized the fact that neither Woide nor Ford had compared their Biblical fragments with those—much richer and more numerous—of the Borgia collection and announced that his volume would be concluded by the following spring, unless the Cardinal decided to include more details.[30] Moreover, he talked about the enormous efforts made in identifying the fragments belonging to the same codex. When he succeeded in this enterprise, he progressively numbered the identified leaves with a pencil and put them in a numbered paper folder ("fascicolo") adding a note concerning the general content (even today both the Neapolitan and the Vatican parchment leaves are preserved in these original folders, with Zoëga's notes, and they show the progressive

26 Letter n. 1155.

27 In the second subfolder the only documents compiled by Zoëga are: a list of words from the Borgia Coptic texts, with indication of the meaning expressed in Latin; a list of toponyms with related terms in Greek or Latin; a lexicon of Coptic terms taken from the Gospel of Matthew; proofs of Coptic types.

28 Buzi, *Catalogo*, 84–86.

29 Letter n. 997.

30 Letters nn. 1028 and 1034. See also letter n. 1052, where Zoëga asks Engelbreth to suggest possible corrections.

numbers written in pencil by the Danish Coptologist). Often, however, he was assailed by doubts, questioning his identifications and starting the work again. In the same way, he also had frequent doubts that he had not provided sufficient information concerning the contents and therefore decided to integrate the work.

Borgia's death (23 November 1804) determined one the most difficult periods of Zoëga's life, characterized by dramatic economic conditions, concerns about the health of his family members and a terrible frustration due to the fact that, although the catalogue had been completed,[31] he could not take advantage of its sale—as he had been promised by the Cardinal—since all the copies had been confiscated because of the well-known dispute between the *Propaganda Fide* and Borgia's heirs concerning the pertinence of the Cardinal's heritage.[32]

Zoëga did not live to see his catalogue published.[33] In fact, it appeared only one year after Zoëga's death, thanks to the intercession of Cardinal Bartolomeo Pacca, Vatican secretary of State, whose cooperation was strenuously urged by Bertel Thorvaldsen and Herman Schubart.[34]

Despite the fact that the *Catalogus* was printed without a final revision by its author, it is undeniably a masterpiece and a still valid point of reference for anybody wishing to deal with the Borgia collection, not only because it allows us to know the organization of the Borgia manuscripts before they were dispersed but also because, at least in part, it represents a model even for modern catalogues.

The extreme importance of the *Catalogus* was in fact immediately perceived by J.-F. Champollion, who, one year after its publication, provided a detailed and admired description, eulogising the scientific rigour and the intellectual clarity of the Danish scholar, and giving his personal contribution to the comprehension of those terms that Zoëga could not translate, certainly due only to a lack of time.[35]

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31 Letter n. 1114.

32 Letter n. 1158. See also letters nn. 1123, 1136, 1157, 1162 and 1191.

33 Concerning the matter of the confiscated catalogue and consequent worries of Zoëga, see letters nn. 1161, 1238 and 1254.

34 Letter n. 1227. Zoëga, *Catalogus*, v*–xliii*.

35 J.-F. Champollion, "Observations sur le catalogue des manuscrits coptes du Musée Borgia à Velletri, ouvrage posthume de George Zoega", *Magasin Encyclopédique* (octobre, 1811), 1–36. It is interesting to observe that the quarrel between the *Propaganda Fide* and Borgia's heirs had an international echo.

Zoëga and Rome

CHAPTER 21

Il collezionismo di *orientalia* nella Roma di Pio VI

Beatrice Palma Venetucci

Tratterò in questo testo di un aspetto meno noto, ma non per questo meno importante, della poliedrica personalità di Zoëga, acuto osservatore, nel lungo soggiorno romano, delle antichità non solo egizie presenti nelle collezioni dell'epoca (aspetto questo, analizzato più volte nel corso del Convegno per quanto attiene a Firenze, Venezia e Napoli), ma anche dei monumenti mitriaci, di Cibele ed Artemide efesia, relativamente ai quali il suo giudizio estetico è quasi sempre negativo.

Riguardo ai numerosi monumenti mitriaci a lui noti, a me preme osservare come Zoëga accosti per primo ai gruppi di Mitra tauroctono le statue leontocefale, svincolandole con grande acume dal mondo egizio e proponendone l'identificazione con Aion.[1] Egli si è rivelato inoltre testimone di uno scavo che deve essere avvenuto quasi sotto i suoi occhi: quello del Mitreo Fagan ad Ostia tra il 1797 e il 1800. Zoëga è in grado di indicare la posizione precisa delle statue ivi ritrovate, oggi ai Musei Vaticani: il gruppo di Mitra che uccide il toro in prossimità dell'entrata della grotta, il leontocefalo a tutto tondo e il rilievo con leontocefalo, quasi nascosti nella parte più profonda del mitreo.[2]

Anticiperò qui alcuni dati sul collezionismo di *orientalia* all'epoca di Pio VI Braschi (1775–1799), papa illuminato che fece eseguire una serie di scavi ed innalzare gli obelischi al Quirinale, Trinità dei Monti e Montecitorio, e che destinò i due Telamoni egizi, ceduti dalla Curia vescovile di Tivoli, al nuovo ingresso monumentale del Museo Pio Clementino. In questi anni si allestiva in Vaticano la Sala dei Papiri, Giambattista Piranesi realizzava gli affreschi del

1 B. Palma Venetucci, "La fortuna di alcuni monumenti mitriaci in età moderna", in *Miti antichi e moderni. Studi in onore di Edo Bellingeri*, a cura di D. Gavrilovich *et al*., (Roma: UniversItalia, 2013), 151–157, 462–466.

2 I. Bignamini, C. Hornsby, *Digging and dealing in eighteenth-century Rome*, (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2010), 11, 113; F. Granieri, "Gli scavi nel mitreo Fagan ad Ostia", in *Culti orientali tra scavo e collezionismo. Atti del Convegno Testimonianze di culti orientali tra scavo e collezionismo, Roma, 2006*, a cura di B. Palma Venetucci, (Roma: Artemide, 2008), 209–219; Palma, "La fortuna di alcuni monumenti", 153–154.

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Caffè degli Inglesi secondo la moda egizia e Antonio Asprucci curava l'allestimento della Sala egizia nella Villa Borghese.[3]

Presenterò i risultati scaturiti da indagini archeologiche, collezionistiche e archivistiche svolte in occasione della mostra "Il fascino dell'Oriente nelle collezioni e musei d'Italia" e del *workshop* connesso. Anche la recente edizione dei *Diari* di Vincenzo Pacetti ha offerto nuovi interessanti spunti di indagine.[4]

Le collezioni visitate da Zoëga, distribuite tra i palazzi di città, le ville suburbane e quelle di villeggiatura, risalgono al Cinquecento come la Colonna e la Altieri, o al Seicento come quelle Pamphilj, Ludovisi, Borghese,[5] Giustiniani,[6] Kircher,[7] Barberini.[8]

Tra le collezioni ove già nel Cinquecento si conservavano *orientalia* è il Palazzo con la Villa Colonna. Qui si trovavano un rilievo mitriaco, un coccodrillo in granito rosso che si riteneva provenisse dal Serapeo del Quirinale, visibile all'esterno del Palazzo dalla fine del Quattrocento e tre frammenti di sculture egizie in granito.[9] Nei giardini della Villa un rilievo con leontocefalo fu visto dal Winckelmann "nel muro vicino alla scala sopra la fontana", e fu definito "di cattivissima maniera" da Zoëga.[10]

Nel Palazzo Altieri al Gesù si conservavano, già nel Cinquecento, alcuni rilievi mitriaci e, successivamente, una sfinge di pietra nera proveniente forse

3 R. Carloni, "L'Oriente e gli acquisti del Museo Pio-Clementino. Il ruolo dei fornitori, dei mediatori e dei restauratori", in *L'Oriente nel Collezionismo, Atti del workshop, Frascati 2010*, a cura di B. Palma Venetucci, *Horti Hesperidum* II.1, (2012), 151–173.

4 A. Cipriani, C. Gasparri *et al.* (a cura di), *Roma 1771–1819*: *I giornali di Vincenzo Pacetti*, (Pozzuoli: Naus, 2011); B. Palma, "*Orientalia* nello studio di Vincenzo Pacetti (1771–1819)", in corso di stampa.

5 Nella Villa Zoëga ricorda due gruppi di Mitra e tre rilievi mitriaci; Palma, "*Orientalia*".

6 Per il gruppo di Mitra tauroctono, B. Palma Venetucci, "Il collezionismo e gli studi antiquari", in *Dopo Sisto V. La Transizione al Barocco* (*1590–1630*), (Roma: Istituto nazionale di studi romani, 1997), 268–283, fig. 78; per la Diana efesia, B. Palma Venetucci, "L'iconografia di Artemide di Efeso-Afrodite di Afrodisia negli scritti e disegni degli eruditi rinascimentali", in *οὐ παν ἐφήμερον. Scritti in memoria di Roberto Pretagostini*, a cura di C. Braidotti, E. Dettori, E. Lanzillotta, (Roma: Quasar, 2009), 705–718, tav. XLV, fig. 125.

7 B. Palma Venetucci, "Alcuni *Aegyptiaca* del Museo Kircheriano", *Studi in onore di R. Olmos*, in corso di stampa.

8 L. Faedo, "Storie di idoli ed obelischi alle Quattro Fontane: note sulle antichità egizie nelle collezioni barberiniane", in *Culti orientali tra scavo e collezionismo*, 123–141.

9 M.G. Picozzi (a cura di), *Palazzo Colonna. Appartamenti. Sculture antiche e dall'antico*, (Roma: De Luca, 2010), 14, cat. 11 (E. Fileri).

10 Il Vacca lo dice rinvenuto nella Vigna Muti sul Quirinale insieme ad un leontocefalo, Palma, "La fortuna di alcuni monumenti", 153.

dal presunto Canopo della Villa del Pincio; anche nella villa sull'Esquilino si conservavano nel Settecento alcuni busti di idoli egizi.[11]

Nell'area della Villa Altieri Verospi al Pincio furono ritrovati agli inizi del Settecento quattro o cinque idoli egizi di granito, acquistati per i Musei Capitolini e poi trasferiti al Museo Gregoriano Egizio in Vaticano, oggi identificati con la regina Tuya, madre di Ramesse II e sposa di Sethi I, Tolemeo II Filadelfo, Arsinoe e un'altra principessa; la De Vos ipotizza che la quinta statua frammentaria sia riconoscibile nella statua di Amasis conservata a Villa Albani e suppone una stessa provenienza per la statua di Tolemeo II di Villa Albani.[12]

Nella Villa Ludovisi due rilievi mitriaci erano situati: il primo nella Libreria del Palazzo grande ed oggi al Royal Ontario Museum di Toronto, il secondo, già in collezione Cesi, è ancora oggi conservato nel Casino dell'Aurora; lo Zoëga definisce il primo, assai restaurato, di "scultura cattivissima", il secondo "di lavoro cattivo".[13]

Una statuetta di Iside pelagia che doveva poggiare il piede sinistro sulla nave, già nella Villa, è oggi al Museo di Mariemont, a seguito della dispersione della Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi di fine Ottocento.[14] La statuetta acefala che aveva attirato già l'attenzione del Winckelmann[15] è così descritta dallo Zoëga:

> Statuina di lavoro andante. Iside priva della testa, del braccio d. e della metà inferiore del braccio s. sta nell'atto di camminare alla s., il ginocchio s. alquanto piegato, calcando con questo piede una barchetta molto piccola, forse larga tre volte la larghezza del piede della dea. Ell'è vestita di tunica sino in terra, vedendosi solamente il davanti dei piedi coi loro sandali. Sopra la tunica porta un peplo frangiato, che dalla spalla d. passa al petto ove incontrandosi coll'altro pinzo, che gira attorno al fianco s., viene annodato e pende sul davanti col suo margine frangiato fino a mezza gamba. Sulle spalle porta di più una specie di clamide non

11 G. Spinola, *Le sculture nel Palazzo Albertoni Spinola a Roma e le collezioni Paluzzi ed Altieri*, (Roma: G. Bretschneider, 1995), 65 nota 116, 77 nn. 68–70, nota 182, 89.

12 M.G. Picozzi, "Le antichità orientali nel Settecento tra collezionismo e studi antiquari", in *Il fascino dell'Oriente nelle collezioni e nei musei d'Italia*, a cura di B. Palma Venetucci, (Roma: Artemide, 2010), 73–78, figg. 1–3.

13 NKS 357b fol., VII, 2, ff. 94b r. n. 4, 94d r. n. 3; B. Palma *et al.*, *I marmi Ludovisi dispersi*, in *Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture*, I.6, a cura di A. Giuliano, (Roma: De Luca, 1986): cat. nn. II, 9 e VIII, 24.

14 Ibid., cat. n. II, 34.

15 B. Palma, *I marmi Ludovisi: storia della collezione*, in *Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture*, I.4, a cura di A. Giuliano, (Roma: De Luca, 1983), 153, doc. n. 37.

> affibbiata, che non si vede come venisse tenuta. la tunica ha delle maniche corte e larghe. Il braccio s. rimane al fianco col gomito piegato. il d. era tutto staccato. L'altezza di questa statua dalla pianta del piede fino alla punta della spalla è di pl. 2, on. 10 *il collo è moderno, la testa non sembra sua, benche antica e calamistrata: pare ritratto.[16]

Grazie a questa indicazione la riconosciamo in un disegno di Antonio Canova.[17]

Una statua frammentaria colossale di faraone in granito, con tracce di urèo sulla fronte, è a Palazzo Altemps,[18] essendo compresa nei 101 pezzi vincolati dal fidecommesso; l'immagine regale è identificabile con il faraone Amenemhat III (figg. 21.1–2), vissuto alla fine della XII dinastia (seconda metà del XIX secolo a.C.), leggermente inclinato perché in atto di portare un vassoio colmo di pesci. Ligorio lo disegnò nel Pantheon di Agrippa su un basamento con i pesci.[19] È brevemente descritto dal Lanzi: "il viso tie(ne) dell'egizio. Ficoroni lo crede fatto per terrore",[20] e minuziosamente dallo Zoëga che fu colpito dalle fattezze non europee e dalla elaborata pettinatura:

> Busto di granitello nero, avanzo d'una statua di grandezza più che naturale (il modulo della testa pl. 1 ½ o 1 ¾). La testa è conservata, la spalla destra (con parte del braccio) e tutto il petto fino allo stomaco. Lo stile è diverso dal consueto egizio accostandosi a quello che sogliamo incontrare nelle tavole Arpocratee. La carne è trattata con morbidezza, ma nella musculatura evvi del rozzo e caricato. Il volto è assai carnoso, le ossa sotto gli occhi molto prominenti, e gli angoli della bocca assai incavati. Questa parte principalmente e le palpebre sono lavorate con una morbidezza che in nessun monumento egizio grande ho incontrata. Gli occhi hanno poco d'incavo, ma la loro forma è affatto Europea. La pupilla è liscia. La fronte è carnosa, senza solchi. Il naso e le labbra sono da moro. La barba, la quale intorno alla tempia si perde sotto la zazzera, e dipoi a poco a poco restringendosi termina quasi in punta, come nelle

16 NKS 357b, f. 329 n. 16. (*) frase aggiunta dall'Autore a piè di pagina.

17 Palma, *I marmi Ludovisi*, 161, fig. 168; D. Candilio, B. Palma Venetucci, "Alcune novità sulla dispersione della collezione Ludovisi", *Eidola* 9 (2012), 141–163, fig. 1.

18 M. De Angelis d'Ossat (a cura di), *Scultura antica in Palazzo Altemps*, (Milano: Electa, 2002), 180–181 (L. Sist Russo).

19 Palma, *I marmi Ludovisi*, 17, 86, doc. n. 16, n. 106; B. Palma Venetucci, "Antichità esotiche nel collezionismo del XV e XVI secolo", in *Culti orientali tra scavo e collezionismo*, 73–88, fig. 1.

20 Palma *et al.*, *I marmi Ludovisi dispersi*, 309.

> più antiche teste greche, è dal volto divisa per un risalto non molto elevato, onde sembra posticcia, essa non è spartita a treccie, ma lavorata ad onde tanto nella direzione perpendicolare quanto nella orizzontale. le onde orizontali sono in proprio senso ondulate, e vengono ad essere del numero di 12. Quelle nell'altra direzione sono sottili, tirate a fili e possono meglio dirsi crespe (…). Sopra la fronte evvi un rilievo corroso dai cui contorni si raccoglie la figura d'un serpente annodato. Le orecchie non compariscono".[21]

Nella Villa Pamphilj al Gianicolo attirano l'attenzione dello studioso danese: un rilievo egizio con ariete appartenente secondo lo Spon al Serapeo del Quirinale, forse parte di una transenna, noto dalla fine del Cinquecento da un disegno di Alonso Chacon, e così descritto "l'ariete è grossolanamente lavorato (…) nell'assieme segue un gusto che sembra piuttosto dei tempi di Adriano che più basso".[22]

Attirano inoltre la sua attenzione un rilievo mitriaco murato sulla facciata meridionale del Casino, definito "di lavoro nitido";[23] due busti di Giove Serapide, oggi a Palazzo Doria, quello con il modio "molto sublime", gli occhi "scavati essendo stati anticamente incastrati di pietra e di smalto";[24] un piccolo Nilo in basalto, a Palazzo Doria, definito "lavoro molto grossolano e scorretto";[25] una Cibele su leone, proveniente da Anzio secondo una notizia del Bartoli ritenuta "lavoro mediocre, forse appartenente alla spina di un circo" e da me attribuita ad un circo di Anzio;[26] ma Leonardo Agostini la dice provenire invece da *Lorium*.[27]

Nel Museo Kircheriano al Collegio Romano, oggi disperso tra vari Musei, sono menzionati dallo Zoëga perlopiù statuette di piccoli dimensioni, amuleti, intagli e cammei, oggetti d'uso. Tra gli *orientalia*, una Diana efesia di bronzo

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21 NKS 357b, f. 93 v. n. 4.

22 B. Palma Venetucci (a cura di), *Villa Doria Pamphilj. Storia della collezione*, (Roma: De Luca, 2001), figg. 40–41, 46; B. Palma Venetucci, B. Cacciotti (a cura di), *Documenti per servire allo studio delle collezioni Doria Pamphilj*, (Roma: Aracne, 2002), 104, a, 119 n. 61.

23 Palma, Cacciotti, *Documenti*, 109, n. 17.

24 B. Palma, "Alcune riflessioni sulla fortuna della collezione di sculture della villa Pamphilj", in *Le virtù e i piaceri in Villa*, a cura di C. Benocci, (Milano: Electa, 1998), 69–87: 77; Palma, *Villa Doria Pamphilj*, fig. 125; Palma, Cacciotti, *Documenti*, 104, g.

25 Palma, Cacciotti, *Documenti*, 104, e.

26 B. Palma, "Una statua di Cibele seduta sul leone a Villa Doria Pamphilj", in *Studi Miscellanei* 22 (1974–1975), 141–147; Palma, Cacciotti, *Documenti*, 117.

27 B. Cacciotti, "Testimonianze di culti orientali ad *Antium*", in *Culti orientali tra scavo e collezionismo*, 221–234: 225, nota 54.

dorato, una statuetta di Mitra;[28] tra i venti *aegyptiaca*, oltre a vari bronzetti raffiguranti tipi assai diffusi (Anubi, Arpocrate, Bes, Osiride, Ptah) Zoëga descrive: un oggetto creduto dal Contucci una patera egizia, ma che egli confronta con un capitello della collezione Borgia e con i sistri: oggi ritenuto un manico di specchio con la dea Hathor;[29] due lastre frammentarie raffiguranti la prima il dio Toth con busto antropomorfo e testa di ibis, l'altra un pileo osiriaco sono identificabili con un rilievo in marmo lunense, rotto in due pezzi, che combaciano anche se non perfettamente, oggi ai Musei Vaticani; la provenienza dal Museo Kircheriano che sorgeva sull'Iseo del Campo Marzio potrebbe far propendere per una loro attribuzione alla decorazione dell'Iseo, piuttosto che a un tempio dedicato al dio Thot-Hermes, dopo il miracolo della pioggia avvenuto sotto il regno di Marco Aurelio, come ipotizzava il Grenier;[30] una statua magica frammentaria, oggetto di una minuta descrizione dello Zoëga che la confronta con un naoforo del Museo Pio Clementino[31] e con un torso del Museo Borgia,[32] sembra potersi identificare con la statua frammentaria con amuleto di Osiride, incisa in Kircher,[33] oggi al Museo Egizio di Torino.[34]

Nel Settecento spiccano le collezioni del cardinale Alessandro Albani nel Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane e nella Villa sulla Salaria. Della prima, venduta ai Musei Capitolini, facevano parte due statuette di Artemide efesia, di cui una forse

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28 NKS 357b, "Museo Kircheriano": f. 183 v / "Bronzi", n. 21; f. 184 o / "Miscellanea", n. 4. Vd. nota 7.

29 E. Leospo, "Documenti del Museo Egizio di Torino relativi alla diffusione dei culti egizi in Roma. La Mensa isiaca e la collezione del Kircher", in *L'Egitto in Italia dall'Antichità al Medioevo. Atti del III Congresso Internazionale Italo-Egiziano* (*Roma, CNR-Pompei, novembre 1995*), a cura di N. Bonacasa *et al.*, (Roma: CNR, 1998), 611–618: 617; M. Nocca, A. Germano (a cura di), *La collezione Borgia. Curiosità e tesori da ogni parte del mondo*, (Napoli: Electa, 2001), XI.8.

30 J.C. Grenier, "A propos d'un bas-relief égyptisant du Museo gregoriano egizio", in *L'Afrique, la Gaule, la Religion à l'époque romaine. Mélanges à la mémoire de Marcel Le Glay*, édité par Y. Le Bohec *et al.*, (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1994), 669–674; G. Capriotti Vittozzi, "Un nouveau relief égyptien de Rome", in *L'Égypte à Rome*, édité par Fr. Lecocq, *Cahiers de la MRSH* 41 (2005), 137–145.

31 NKS 357b, f. 184 v., n. 14; E.Q. Visconti, *Il Museo Pio-Clementino, illustrato e descritto da Giambattista ed Ennio Quirino Visconti*, I–VII, (Milano; pe' torchi di Antonio Fulgoni, 1807), 8–10, tav. VI; Palma, "Alcuni *Aegyptiaca* del Museo Kircheriano"; C. Pietrangeli, *I Musei Vaticani, cinque secoli di storia*, (Roma: Quasar, 1985), 228.

32 R. Cantilena, P. Rubino (a cura di), *La collezione egiziana del Museo Archeologico di Napoli*, (Napoli: Arte Tipografica, 1989), 110–111, n. 11.11, fig. 16.

33 A. Kircher, *Oedipus aegyptiacus* . . ., III, (Romae: ex typographia Vitalis Mascardi, 1652–1654), 507–508.

34 A. Roullet, *The Egyptian and egyptianizing monuments of Imperial Rome*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 121, n. 226; Torino, Museo Egizio, inv. n. suppl. 9, tav. CLXXI, figg. 244–245; Palma, "Alcuni *Aegyptiaca* del Museo Kircheriano".

proveniente da Anzio, quattro idoli egizi in basalto e l'Iside con sistro già presso Girolamo Lotteri.[35] Nella Villa si trovavano alcune antichità mitraiche ritenute provenire da uno stesso Mitreo: un rilievo con leontocefalo alato collegato dallo Zoëga con il culto mitriaco e con Aion, un leontocefalo in marmo lunense su globo, un rilievo con Mitra tauroctono, un leontocefalo in marmo bigio oggi nel Museo Pio Clementino.[36] Tra gli *aegyptiaca*, oltre alle statue Verospi, un canopo proveniente dalla Villa di Domiziano a Torre Paola al Circeo, acquistato dall'Antiquario Borioni,[37] un piccolo Nilo proveniente da Villa d'Este a Tivoli.[38] Altre antichità come le due sfingi di basalto, oggi al Museo di Monaco di Baviera, provenivano da Villa Adriana.[39]

Le collezioni dei Musei Vaticani si formarono sia con oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi dell'epoca, sia con la dispersione di importanti collezioni, come la Mattei e la Montalto Negroni;[40] quella di Giambattista Piranesi, venduta dal figlio Francesco nel 1779, comprendeva una statua di Apis in granito da Villa Adriana,[41] un busto di Osiride in basalto, due sfingi, un putto con coccodrillo,[42] quella dei Rolandi Magnini, poi Jacobilli di Foligno, una statua di Amon Ra, un naoforo ed un Falcone in basalto.[43] Altre opere arrivarono ai Musei Vaticani attraverso il mercato antiquario: una scimmia egizia in granito verde fu venduta da Antonio Antiseri nel 1779, un'altra in basalto da Luigi Tronci nel 1781.[44]

Esaminiamo ora brevemente alcuni scavi a Roma e nel Lazio sotto Pio VI. A Roma quelli del Leoncilli o Leoncini, mercante di antichità e di Giuseppe Bettini al Foro Romano e Campo Vaccino (1774–1776) portarono alla luce una

35 B. Palma Venetucci, S. Messina, "Documenti inediti relativi alla vendita delle collezioni Albani e Cristina di Svezia-Odescalchi", *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* 17 (2003), 79–141: 89, 107 nn. 48–49, 112 n. 224, 113 nn. 23–24 e 27, 91 fig. 3, 113 n. 25; B. Cacciotti, "Gli scavi di antichità del cardinale Alessandro Albani", *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* 15 (2001), 25–60, fig. 4.

36 Carloni, "L'Oriente e gli acquisti del Museo Pio-Clementino", tab. I; Palma, "La fortuna di alcuni monumenti mitriaci", 155 fig. 4, 156–157.

37 Picozzi, "Le antichità orientali", 75, fig. 9.

38 Per il Nilo a Parigi, Museo del Louvre cfr. M. Mangiafesta, "Gusto esotico nelle collezioni estensi tra antico e moderno", in *L'Oriente nel collezionismo*, 127–149, fig. 3.

39 B. Cacciotti, "Frammenti dell'Egitto di Adriano: dalla villa di Tivoli alle collezioni antiquarie", in *Il fascino dell'Oriente*, 229–234: 233, nota 24.

40 Carloni, "L'Oriente e gli acquisti del Museo Pio-Clementino", 154, 170, fig. 3, tab. I.

41 Palma, *Il fascino dell'Oriente*, cat. n. 8 (M. Cappozzo).

42 Musei Vaticani, inv. nn. 22798, 988, 991, 2827, C. Gasparri, "La Galleria Piranesi da Giovan Battista a Francesco", *Xenia* 3 (1982), 91–107.

43 O. Lollio Barberi, G. Parola, M.P. Toti, *Le antichità egizie di Roma Imperiale*, (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1995), 150–156. Musei Vaticani, inv. nn. 22679, 22703, 22689, Carloni, "L'Oriente e gli acquisti del Museo Pio-Clementino", tab. I, 172, fig. 6.

44 Carloni, "L'Oriente e gli acquisti del Museo Pio-Clementino", tab. V e VI.

statuetta egizia, quelli del 1776–1779 al Conservatorio delle Mendicanti presso la Basilica di Costantino una piccola sfinge alata e l'ornamento di una testa di Iside.[45] Negli scavi di Venceslao Pezzolli (1779) nell'Orto dell'Ospedale di San Giovanni in Laterano ed in quelli successivi (1785–1788) furono rinvenuti un busto di fanciullo isiaco, uno di Iside, maggiore del naturale, un idolo egizio di basalto acefalo.[46] Negli scavi Albani del 1779 alla Villa dei Maroniti presso San Pietro in Vincoli fu rinvenuto un busto di Iside velato ornato di due serpenti con disco solare, acquistato da Carlo Albani, mediante l'agente Tito Fabbri dai Musei Vaticani.[47]

Nel Lazio, a Tor Colombaro sulla via Appia dagli scavi condotti nel 1771 da Gavin Hamilton alla Villa di Gallieno, provengono: un busto di Giove Serapide, un ibis in rosso antico e una testa di bambino isiaco.[48] A Salone, negli scavi condotti da Nicola La Piccola, furono rinvenuti due busti di Iside e una statua di Cibele seduta.[49] Da *Gabii* proviene una statua di Iside, dispersa.[50]

Forse ad una villa romana in località Colonna è stata ricondotta la statua di Bes di Palazzo Verospi accostata dalla Picozzi al Bes Barracco di analoga provenienza.[51] Anche un frammento di rilievo mitriaco proviene da "la vigna di Luigi Dominicis, situata tra Colonna e la strada corriera".[52] A Palestrina potrebbe essere ricondotto un gruppo frammentario di Mitra nel Palazzo Barberini di Palestrina,[53] mentre da Velletri potrebbe provenire il Mitra tauroctono visto a Palazzo Ginetti dallo Zoëga, oggi a Parigi, Museo del Louvre.[54]

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45 C. Pietrangeli, *Scavi e scoperte di antichità sotto il pontificato di Pio VI*, (Roma: Istituto di studi romani, 1958), 31, 55; Palma, "*Orientalia*".

46 Musei Vaticani, inv. nn. 610, 697, G. Spinola, *Il museo Pio Clementino*, II, (Città del Vaticano: Musei Vaticani, 1999), n. 105.

47 Carloni, "L'Oriente e gli acquisti del Museo Pio-Clementino", tab. I; Musei Vaticani inv. n. 684, Spinola, *Il Museo Pio Clementino*, II, 117, n. 90; Palma, "La fortuna di alcuni monumenti mitriaci", 156–157.

48 Bignamini Hornsby, *Digging*, 176, 275–276; G. Rocco, "Attestazioni di culti e rinvenimenti di antichità orientali tra le vie Appia e Latina nel territorio di *Bovillae* e *Castrimoenium*", in *L'Oriente nel collezionismo*, 601–637, figg. 8–10.

49 Bignamini Hornsby, *Digging*, 127; Pietrangeli, *Scavi e scoperte di antichità*, 87–88.

50 Bignamini Hornsby, *Digging*, 84.

51 G. Picozzi, "Gli *Aegyptiaca* delle collezioni Vitelleschi e Verospi tra XVII e XVIII secolo", in *L'Oriente nel collezionismo*, 67–93; Palma, *Il fascino dell'Oriente*, cat. 11 (L. Sist).

52 M.J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithriacae*, I, (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), n. 210.

53 Ibid., n. 211.

54 Ibid., nn. 208–209, fig. 67.

Importanti gli scavi di Villa Adriana a Tivoli dove effettuarono scavi: il Michilli al Pecile, i Gesuiti alle Cento Camerelle, Gavin Hamilton al Pantanello.[55]

Negli scavi di Anzio furono rinvenuti nel Seicento la Cibele sul leone Pamphilj ed un rilievo mitriaco,[56] nel Settecento una statua di Anubi ai Musei Vaticani, una sacerdotessa di Iside a Palazzo Corsini, la Artemide efesia Albani, forse un sacerdote isiaco in basalto in collezione di Richard Worsley, il busto di Serapide Giustiniani.[57]

55 Cacciotti, "Frammenti dell'Egitto di Adriano", 229–234; B. Cacciotti, "Statue egittizzanti da Tivoli tra rappresentazione e ritualità", in *L'Oriente nel collezionismo*, 473–502.

56 Bignamini, Hornsby, *Digging*, 46,112; Cacciotti, "Testimonianze di culti orientali", 222 nota 9, 225 nota 54.

57 Cacciotti, "Testimonianze di culti orientali", 222 fig. 2, 224 nota 44, 227 figg. 8–9.

FIGURE 21.1–2 *Fronte e retro del 'Faraone Ludovisi', Roma, Palazzo Altemps, su concessione del Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo—Soprintendenza speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.*

CHAPTER 22

Georg Zoëga e gli scavi nel territorio laziale

Beatrice Cacciotti

Il copioso carteggio di Georg Zoëga, recentemente pubblicato da Karen Ascani,[1] insieme all'*Apparatus ad Auctoris opus: Bassirilievi antichi di Roma*,[2] offre un prezioso contributo per il fervore di scavi che nella seconda metà del Settecento mise a soqquadro la campagna romana.[3]

In questa sede si è scelto di focalizzare l'attenzione sulle rovine sparse in Vallericcia, ove erano state intraprese, da monsignor Antonio Despuig y Dameto,[4] ricerche delle quali Zoëga ebbe conoscenza diretta.[5]

Le prime notizie (marzo 1791)[6] sono relative al bassorilievo del cosiddetto *rex nemorensis*[7] e riflettono quell'interesse documentario volto ad ampliare il repertorio iconografico che lo studioso danese stava riunendo per una visione totalizzante delle antiche civiltà. La descrizione doviziosa di particolari, al

1 Ø. Andreasen, K. Ascani (hrsgg.), *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II–V, (Kopenhagen: Gesellschaft für dänische Sprache und Literatur, 2013).

2 NKS 357b fol., VII 1, 2°. J.B. Hartmann, "Appunti su Giorgio Zoëga e Carlo Labruzzi", *Studi Romani* 24 (1976), 365; B. Cacciotti, B. Palma Venetucci (a cura di), *Documenti per servire allo studio delle collezioni Doria Pamphilj*, (Roma: Aracne, 2002), 104–126 (M. Mangiafesta).

3 In generale: I. Bignamini, C. Hornsby, *Digging and dealing in eighteenth-century Rome*, (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2010).

4 M. Moltesen, "Cardinal Despuig's Excavations at Vallericcia", in *Illuminismo e Ilustración: le antichità e i loro protagonisti in Spagna e in Italia nel XVIII secolo*, a cura di J. Beltrán Fortes *et al.*, (Roma: Erma di Bretschneider, 2003), 243–254; M. Domínguez Ruiz, "El cardenal Despuig y su colección de statuaria en Raixa", *Verdolay, Revista del Museo Arqueológico de Murcia* 11 (2008), 325–340.

5 K. Ascani, "Il carteggio di Georg Zoëga (1755–1809) mediatore tra Roma e la Danimarca", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 37 (2012), 151–157. Un progetto di ricerca su "Georg Zoëga e il *Latium Vetus*" è in corso da parte della scrivente.

6 *Apparatus*, ff. 147–149.

7 Soggetto altamente discusso, le interpretazioni sembrano convergere verso Egisto che, incitato da Clitemnestra, uccide Agamennone alla presenza di Elettra: H. Froning, *Marmor-Schmuckreliefs mit griechischen Mythen im 1. Jh. v. Chr.*, (Mainz: Zabern, 1981), 81–100; M. Moltesen, M. Nielsen (eds.), *Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Catalogue, Etruria and Central Italy, 450–30 B.C.*, (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1996), 218–220, n. 97; Moltesen, "Cardinal Despuig's Excavations", 246–247.

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limite della pedanteria, si innesta in quel metodo di lavoro dichiarato da Zoëga nella lettera programmatica del 1791 allo storico Peter Federik Suhm quando, con vena polemica verso la farraginosa e fantasiosa antiquaria settecentesca, dichiara la necessità di un approccio "scientifico" che applichi il rigore filologico dai testi letterari ai monumenti figurati.[8] Effettivamente il Danese arriva a disegnare davanti ai nostri occhi il bassorilievo con le parole e, tra i tanti particolari rilevati, degne di nota sono le tracce di colore che segnala nella barba del moribondo ("nel moribondo comparisce [*scil.* barba] come rossiccia").

Successivamente, nella lettera del 23 aprile,[9] l'approccio per così dire asettico nei confronti del bassorilievo lascia spazio a un'esegesi di tipo religioso della scena raffigurata, ovvero Oreste che uccide Neottolemo nel tempio di Delfi; tra gli altri antiquari prevalse, invece, quella del cruento rituale di successione del *rex nemorensis*.[10] Allo stesso tempo attraverso l'analisi critica degli aspetti formali ("trattamento legnoso"), compositivi ("movimenti innaturali") ed espressivi ("rigidità delle figure") àncora l'opera a una griglia temporale-stilistica secondo i parametri winckelmanniani, formulando un giudizio che lo conduce a definirla come la "più antica opera greca o italica".

L'*Apparatus* e le lettere sono, in questo caso, simmetriche e complementari: oggettivazione dei dati nell'uno e approfondimento della conoscenza nelle altre, decostruzione dell'opera nel primo e ricomposizione in un giudizio critico nelle seconde, rappresentando due prospettive distinte, l'uno di lavoro *in*

8 P. Krarup, "Due archeologi danesi. Georg Zoëga e Peter Oluf Bröndsted", in *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne et d'archéologie offerts à Paul Collart*, édité par P. Ducrey *et al.*, (Lausanne: Bibliothèque historique vaudoise, 1976), 277–284.

9 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, III, 67–73, lettera n. 517.

10 E. Lucidi, *Memorie storiche dell'antichissimo municipio ora terra dell'Ariccia . . .*, (Roma: presso i Lazzarini, 1796), 97; Id., *Lettera critica dell'avvocato D. Carlo Fea al signor abbate Niccola Ratti . . .*, (Roma: presso i Lazzarini, 1798), 43 (d); cfr. l'incisione di P. Fontana, 1791, in *I. Dianas Hellige Lund. Fund fra en Helligdom i Nemi—In the Sacred Grove of Diana. Finds from a Sanctuary at Nemi*, edited by M. Moltesen, (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1997), 40, fig. 23. Sulla complessa tradizione del re-sacerdote nel bosco sacro di Diana nemorense e sull'ampia letteratura a riguardo, tra gli studi più recenti si segnalano: C.M. Green, *Roman Religion and the cult of Diana at Aricia*, (Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 147–184; F. Diosono, "Il *Rex Nemorensis* tra mito, storia ed archeologia", *Bollettino dell'Unione Storia ed Arte* 102 (2010), 7–16; M.J. Pena, M. Oller, "Hipólito y Orestes en el santuario de Diana en Nemi: contaminaciones mitógraficas antiguas y modernas. Análisis crítico de las fuentes literarias", *Latomus* 71.2 (2012), 338–372; L. Capogrossi Colognesi, "Il 'rex Nemorensis' e le origini della regalità 'politica' nel Lazio arcaico", in *Caligola: la trasgressione al potere*, a cura di F. Coarelli, G. Ghini, (Roma: Gangemi, 2013), 51–56.

fieri convogliato in una dimensione privata, le altre di comunicazione e condivisione con un pubblico scelto.

La visita che fa al Museo Despuig rientra in un metodo di studio che pone l'osservazione al centro di qualsiasi sistema di conoscenza, sperimentato da Winckelmann nella *Geschichte* (1764),[11] da Ennio Quirino Visconti (ad esempio nei *Cataloghi borghesiani*) e da J.B. Seroux d'Angicourt, ai cui esordi vi era stato il conte de Caylus, fondatore dell'archeologia positiva,[12] e ancor prima Francesco Bianchini.[13]

Lo stesso dettagliato resoconto, oltre che al rilievo, è riservato a una statua trovata nel medesimo scavo che al principio venne identificata con Diana cacciatrice, ma che un sopralluogo in data 20 aprile 1791 presso lo studio di Angelo Cremaschi,[14] dove era stata trasportata per il restauro, lo convinse che si trattava invece di Virbio-Ippolito, il *rex nemorensis* (fig. 22.1).[15] Successivamente, dopo un'ulteriore consulenza con lo scultore Cardelli, provò a interrompere il restauro in corso, cercando di convincere anche Despuig, al quale fu riportato il giudizio come espresso da un inglese, forse che una tale paternità lo potesse rendere più accettabile, in considerazione della fama di grandi estimatori di antichità che gli antiquari inglesi si erano andati procurando presso i collezionisti. A ragione Zoëga aveva notato il sesso sporgente sotto la veste, insistendo per un'interpretazione al maschile del personaggio raffigurato (riconosciuto, infatti, in seguito come un Dioniso).[16]

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11 O.R. Pinelli, "Osservare, confrontare, dubitare: Ennio Quirino Visconti e i fondamenti della storia dell'arte antica", in *Villa Borghese: i principi, le arti, la città dal Settecento all'Ottocento*, a cura di A. Campitelli, (Milano: Skira, 2003), 123–130.

12 A. Schnapp, "La méthode de Caylus", in *Caylus mécène du roi. Collectionner les antiquités au XVIII^e siècle*, édité par I. Aghion, M. Avisseau Broustet, (Paris: Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, 2002), 53–63.

13 B. Cacciotti, "Francesco Bianchini e lo studio del tempo. Un contributo alla 'Istoria' di *Antium*", in *Anzio e i suoi Fasti*, a cura di T. Ceccarini, (Anzio: Edizioni Tipografia Marina 2010), 33–45.

14 *Apparatus*, ff. 158–159; K. Ascani, "An Eye-witness Account. Zoega and Despuig, in *I. Dianas Hellige Lund*, 177–179; Moltesen, "Cardinal Despuig's Excavations", 247–248.

15 Ippolito, ucciso dai cavalli di Poseidone, era stato riportato in vita da Asclepio per intercessione di Artemide, che lo nascose nel bosco di Nemi dove assunse le sembianze di un vegliardo divino di nome Virbio (Ov., *Fast*., VI, 737–762 e *Met*., XV, 496–546; Verg., *Aen*., VII, 765–780; Paus. II, 27,4), ma per le complesse implicazioni storico-religiose e la figura di Virbio, quale figlio di Ippolito e Aricia cfr. Green, *Roman Religion*, 208–231.

16 M. Moltesen, *Catalogue Imperial Rome III. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*, (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 2005), 140–142, n. 59.

L'introduzione del personaggio Virbio-Ippolito gli concede un'apertura verso il contesto cultuale che, nel bosco aricino, avrebbe accolto la statua.

Sono proprio le notizie sul luogo dello scavo, combinate con la cartografia storica e con le altre fonti antiquarie, a permetterci nuove osservazioni sul contesto antico, per nulla religioso.

Le indicazioni che fornisce nel tempo sono le seguenti:

- marzo 1791: "ruderi creduti un tempio della Aricina [*scil.* Diana]";[17]
- 20 aprile 1791: "fra dei ruderi che si vogliono credere del tempio di Diana Nemorense, benché situati al principio della valle Aricina vicino ai mulini d'Aricia, detti di Genzano, onde troppo distanti dal lago di Nemi presso cui era situato questo tempio";[18]
- 23 aprile 1791: "am Eingang des Haines, wo man vom Aricinischen Thale heraufkam, war ein ihrem Gefährten besonders gewidmeter Ort, der Clivus Virbii hieß. Hier war ohne Zweifel auch ein minderer Tempel, wo bey Besuchung des Heiligthums die ersten Cerimonien vorgenommen; und so viel sich aus den Localumständen schliessen läßt, ist dis der nämliche Ort wo gegenwärtig nachgegraben wird";[19]
- *post* 22 giugno 1791: "Da quanto posso inferire dalle notizie comunicatemi dal Cremaschi intorno al luogo della scoperta, doveva questo precisamente essere il Clivius Virbii";[20]
- *post* 2 giugno 1791: "Ancora che il luogo della scoperta fusse il Clivio di Virbio".[21]

Il luogo è sempre lo stesso. Ciò che si trasforma e si evolve nel tempo è l'interpretazione dei resti scavati che è viziata dall'identificazione della statua, in principio come Diana, in seguito come Virbio: così dalla proposta di un luogo sacro dedicato a Diana aricina (era stato Lucas Holstenius[22] a dare origine alla tradizione dell'esistenza di due luoghi sacri a Diana in quest'area; una presunta succursale aricina di quello di Nemi si è anche in seguito ipotizzato, ma

17 *Apparatus*, f. 147.

18 *Apparatus*, f. 158.

19 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, III, 70, lettera n. 517.

20 *Apparatus*, f. 159.

21 *Apparatus*, f. 159.

22 L. Holstenius, *Annotationes in Italiam antiquam Cluverii*, (Romae: typis Iacobi Dragondelli, 1666), (186 Pag. 921, lin. 41): L. Morpurgo, "Nemus Aricinum", *Monumenti Antichi, Lincei* 13 (1903), 301.

non è mai stato provato),[23] passa al famoso tempio di Diana nemorense, su cui giustamente solleva dubbi per le effettive distanze (era sulla sponda nord-orientale del Lago di Nemi come già indicato nella pianta del 1671 di Athanasius Kircher),[24] per indirizzarsi, infine, verso un tempio minore dedicato a Virbio in prossimità di quel *Clivius Virbii*[25] rammentato dalle fonti latine[26] e che troviamo segnalato nella pianta di Innocenzo Mattei del 1666.[27]

L'aspetto più interessante della testimonianza di Zoëga è costituito però dal disegno della pianta dello scavo e dalla sua descrizione, realizzati in occasione della visita, la seconda, che il 22 giugno 1791 compie presso Despuig, quando riceve dallo stesso notizie più precise rispetto al luogo indagato.[28]

Di questo disegno, negli appunti del Danese, esistono due redazioni: la prima (fig. 22.2a) appare cancellata, verosimilmente perché riuscita male; la seconda (fig. 22.2b) più estesa, con alcune variazioni rispetto alla precedente, sembra rispecchi quanto volesse riprodurre. Più che da un sopralluogo ad Ariccia, l'esecuzione è correlata alla visita a palazzo Nuñez,[29] residenza romana di Despuig che lo riceve e gli dà alcuni ragguagli sulle scoperte ("questa seconda volta dalle notizie più precise rispetto al luogo dello scavo comunicatomi dal prelato medesimo").[30] Sappiamo che Despuig aveva fatto eseguire alcuni disegni dello scavo mostrati liberalmente agli studiosi.[31] Non possiamo

23 Per il cd. tempio di Diana nell'Orto di Mezzo cfr. A. Nibby, *Viaggio antiquario ne' contorni di Roma*, II, (Bologna: Forni, rist. 1988, ed. originale 1819), 156–157; G. Florescu, "Aricia. Studio storico topografico", *Ephemeris dacoromana* 3 (1925), 47. Per i resti conservati: M. Lilli, *Ariccia. Carta Archeologica*, (Roma: Erma di Bretschneider, 2002), 190–200, n. 30.

24 A. Kircher, *Latium*, (Amstelodami: apud Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & hæredes Elizei Weyerstraet, 1671), cap. VII, tav. tra pagina 48 e 49. L'area del santuario, già scavata nel corso dei secoli XVI–XVII, è stata negli ultimi anni oggetto di indagini archeologiche, i cui importanti risultati sono stati ampiamente editi. Da ultimo, con bibliografia precedente: G. Ghini, F. Diosono, "Il santuario di Diana a Nemi: recenti acquisizioni dai nuovi scavi", in *Sacra Nominis Latini: i santuari del Lazio arcaico e repubblicano*, a cura di E. Marroni, (Napoli: Loffredo, 2012), 121–130.

25 Riconosciuto come un diverticolo che dalla via Appia conduceva al santuario di Diana a Nemi.

26 Ovid., *Fast*., III, 756.

27 A.P. Frutaz (a cura di), *Le carte del Lazio*, II, (Roma: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1972), tav. 47 (XVII.7).

28 *Apparatus*, f. 159.

29 M. Domínguez Ruiz, "Antoni Despuig y su tiempo: actualización biográfica y contexto histórico", in *El fons epigràfic de la colleció Despuig d'escultura clàssica*, editado por A. Soler i Nicolau, (Palma: Ajuntament de Palma, 2011), 219–220, 244.

30 *Apparatus*, f. 159.

31 Lucidi, *Memorie*, 225.

così escludere che anche Zoëga li abbia utilizzati e che il disegno sia una copia da appunti forniti dal prelato e commissionati a qualche suo collaboratore.[32]

Risultato di quanto comunicatogli durante l'incontro, parimenti, sembra essere il commento allo scavo che correda il disegno:[33]

> Pianta dello scavo aricino contro il colle ove dalla via Appia si sale verso Genzano sono molte stanze di varie grandezze e delle quali alcune mostrano d'avere servito da bagni. tutte assieme formano una pianta quadrangolare bislunga. fra queste stanze evvi una di poca grandezza, quadrilunga, cinta d'un muro senza alcun ingresso. in essa trovavasi un piano alzato similmente bislungo, alto circa pl. 2 ½, composto d'uno strato di selci, un altro di mattone, un terzo di lastrico con del musaico grossolano. fra esso e il muro da tre parti rimaneva dello spazio quanto bisognava per liberamente girare (il quarto lato univa al muro) e accanto passava un condotto di piombo.[34] in una parte del quale si legge P AELIUS SYMPHOR FECI. Sull'uno degli angoli del piano rilevato, di un qualche modo si può paragonare a un bigliardo, restava una cassa quadrata di marmo, senza coperchio, di circa pl. 1 ½ di quadratura.
>
> in mezzo a questa fabrica di molte stanze e contro la collina, erano due scale, una più grande, l'altra come una scala secreta, per l'una e l'altra giungevasi a un raccordo quadrato, il quale aveva due atri grandi quadrangolari l'uno appresso all'altro, e dentro il quale erano due toli e due nicchioni. Il primo tolo era vicino al passaggio del secondo atrio a questo recinto, sul luogo più alto di tutto il fabbricato, e le sue rovine erano cadute dentro il secondo atrio. fra esse fu trovata la statua di Virbio, e quell'antichissimo bassorilievo. il tolo aveva quattro porte opposte fra di se a croce. dopo questo tolo erano i due nicchioni l'uno allato all'altro, aperti verso il tolo descritto, e grandi quanto una metà del medesimo. dietro le nicchie e facendo croce assieme con esse e col primo tolo era un secondo, molto più basso del primo, e incrustrato di tartaro, onde doveva avere servito da conserva d'acqua. da esso passava un condotto al fabbricato inferiore terminando in una stanza bislunga una parete semicircolare dalla parte più vicina al tolo. simili condotti passavano a due altre stanze simili, collocate in opposizione agli altri due lati del recinto. ho chiamato toli delle fabbriche rotondo, senza sapere se aveano tetto e in che modo fussero coperte.

32 Persona di fiducia del Despuig, coinvolta nello scavo, fu Félix Lobo: Domínguez Ruiz, "Antoni Despuig", 244.

33 *Apparatus*, f. 179.

34 Cancellato: "canale".

> La scala grande aveva di differenza in distanza dei poggi ossia piani pavuti di musaico.
>
> Sembra che tutte queste stanze attorno al sacrario fussero principalmente destinate per le purgazioni o lustrazioni di chi andava a visitare il santuario Nemorense.

Si trattava di una struttura a due piani; al livello inferiore vi era un portico colonnato e sul lato meridionale un piccolo ambiente dove fu trovata una *fistula* plumbea iscritta; entrambe le scale, una di servizio, conducevano al piano superiore dove sul lato sinistro vi erano alcune stanze comunicanti. In una si conservavano strutture a pianta circolare senza copertura ("toli") combinate con due nicchioni; il primo "tolo" aveva quattro aperture, mentre il secondo, più in basso, mostrava incrostazioni di tartaro ("cisterna"). Da questo settore un sistema di condutture, indicate a tratteggio, continuava in tre rami nel resto degli ambienti sottostanti. Si vedevano ancora pavimenti a mosaico nel pianerottolo ("poggi") della scala principale.

La canalizzazione documentata nello schizzo sembra coincidere con quella descritta da Lucidi,[35] che riferisce sulla presenza del nome di *Publius Aelius Symphor*, per quattro volte, e di quello di *Aelius Galaes*, per cinque volte.[36]

Insieme a questi condotti di piombo, il canonico ne ricorda altri "tutti impellicciati di marmo" che suppose potessero appartenere "a bagni" e unitamente menziona capitelli, colonne di granito e di alabastro—che suggerivano grande sfarzo dell'edificio—, un'iscrizione con dedica a Plotina del liberto imperiale Agatirso e un cospicuo nucleo scultoreo, che comprendeva "una statua

35 Lucidi, *Memorie*, 226.

36 CIL 14.2175, 15.7828. Per il *plumbarius Symphor*: Ch. Bruun, *The Water Supply of Ancient Rome. A Study of Roman Imperial Administration*, (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1991), 80, 329; Ch. Bruun, "*Cognomina plumbariorum*", *Epigraphica* 72 (2010), 322; H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom. Ein Namenbuch*, (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter 2003²), 1000; P. Weaver, *Repertorium Familiae Caesaris—Aelii Augusti Liberti*, VII, n. 1564. Lo stesso personaggio compare su un'epigrafe ostiense dedicata ad *Helpis*, sua giovane convivente che aveva affrancato (CIL 14.524). Per il cognome grecanico: H. Solin, *Die Stadtrömischen Sklavennamen. Ein Namenbuch*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), 468–469. Non credo che l'iscrizione di *Galaes* possa attestare una sua proprietà ad Ariccia che beneficiava di acqua pubblica come proposto da G. Boulvert, *Domestique et fonctionnaire sous le Haut-Empire romain. La condition de l'affranchi et de l'esclave du prince*, (Paris: Presses Univ. Franche-Comté, 1974), 205 e nota 39. Usualmente il nome del proprietario sul bollo fistulare è indicato al genitivo: Ch. Bruun, "Le fistule acquarie e i proprietari terrieri nel *suburbium* di Roma", in Suburbium*: il suburbio di Roma dalla crisi del sistema delle ville a Gregorio Magno*, a cura di Ph. Pergola *et al.*, (Roma: École Française de Rome, 2003), 485–501.

mancante della testa, e di un piede, creduta da alcuni di Diana, ma da più altri di Ippolito (…) ed altro [*scil*. bassorilievo del *rex nemorensis*] da noi riportato al cap. X".[37] Questi due pezzi costituiscono il *trade d'union* con il disegno di Zoëga, il quale attribuisce la loro scoperta al secondo ambiente ("atrio"). Tra gli oggetti ricordati se ne distacca uno che consente ancora un aggancio con impianti termali: la "tazza di basalte verde collocata sopra un piede canalato della medesima materia",[38] che Zoëga, in subordinazione all'interpretazione religiosa dell'edificio, ritenne destinata alle abluzioni rituali. Si tratta della menzione di un elemento importante sia per l'oggetto in sé sia per il materiale: un bacino con supporto scanalato, largamente impiegato nelle terme romane, che si inquadra in quella produzione di *labra* che utilizza materiali preziosi, quali la grovacca dello Wadi Hammamat,[39] ancora definita nel Settecento "basalto", il cui utilizzo è attestato tra l'età augustea e quella antonina.[40] Particolarmente pregiata è di uso imperiale o di una committenza abbastanza ricca.

Finora la collocazione del ritrovamento, seguendo la narrazione di Lucidi, è stata situata nelle "vigne di Paolo Ragaglia e Giuseppe Morelli[41] poste in Vallericcia vicino al fosso, dove corre l'acqua dell'emissario del lago di Nemi".[42] Le segnalazioni del fosso e dell'emissario inducono a ricercare l'area indagata nel settore nord-orientale di Vallericcia, dove in una pianta dell'Archivio Chigi (fig. 22.2c), della seconda metà del Seicento,[43] sono evidenziati il corso d'acqua

37 Lucidi, *Memorie*, 97, 158, 226.

38 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, 111, 70–71, lettera n. 517; *Apparatus*, f. 149; Lucidi, *Memorie*, 125.

39 A. Ambrogi, *Labra di età romana in marmi bianchi e colorati*, (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2005): si conservano solo tre vasche in basanite (L23, L24, L25) e un supporto (S16), pervenuto privo di provenienza nei Musei Vaticani, di tipologia affine a quello scoperto a Vallericcia.

40 R. Belli Pasqua, *Sculture di età romana in "basalto"*, (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1995), 17–28, 51, 55, 58.

41 Lucidi, *Memorie*, 224–225; a pagina 158 nota che i terreni sono attraversati da "un ruscello d'acqua"; R. Lefevre, "Storia degli scavi e ritrovamenti archeologici in territorio di Ariccia", *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 96 (1973), 97, fig. 2/17; Bignamini, Hornsby, *Digging*, 1, 50–51.

42 Sull'emissario che mette in collegamento Vallericcia con il lago di Nemi: P. Guldager Bilde, "Gli scavi nordici della Villa di S. Maria sul lago di Nemi (1998–2002)", in *Lazio & Sabina* 3, a cura di G. Ghini, (Roma: De Luca, 2006), 205–206; M. Placidi, F. Baldi, "L'emissario del Lago di Nemi", in *Caligola*, 241–243.

43 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio Chigi, n. 24995; Lilli, *Ariccia*, fig. 399. Un esame autoptico non ha rilevato i nomi dei due proprietari, probabilmente cambiati rispetto al secolo precedente.

presso cui si innesta la "Mola di Genzano",[44] che rammenta "i mulini d'Aricia, detti di Genzano", indicati da Zoëga, in una delle sue lettere (cfr. *supra* 20 aprile 1791), quale riferimento allo scavo Despuig.

Il contesto è stato genericamente riferito a una villa, a volte attribuita al liberto Agatirso in virtù dell'iscrizione scoperta all'epoca[45] e sulla scia dell'ipotesi di Lucidi;[46] una "Landhaus" fu evocata anche da Zoëga.[47]

L'interpretazione del contesto rimane ancora di difficile soluzione, ma i dati che stanno emergendo spingono a rivederne l'attribuzione vulgata.

Sembra probabile poter ammettere un sistema idraulico, articolato attorno a una fontana-ninfeo(?) oppure un serbatoio di distribuzione dell'acqua. La consistenza delle condutture, che dovevano estendersi per un ampio tratto vista la ripetizione dei nomi dei liberti, potrebbe suggerire nell'area circostante l'esistenza di un impianto termale.

Le *fistulae* bollate dai liberti *Galaes* e *Symphor*, considerando che non era così comune poter usufruire di una condotta privata all'interno di possedimenti da parte di persone di rango non aristocratico,[48] sembrano indicare che i lavori furono eseguiti su commissione dell'imperatore, tanto più che i due recano un gentilizio imperiale. Appare verosimile che i due liberti (a questa classe sociale appartenevano molti produttori di condotti) si impegnarono per il rifornimento idrico di un complesso di appannaggio imperiale. I condotti foderati di marmo per lo scorrimento delle acque potrebbero anche essi assolvere alla *munificentia* dell'edificio.[49]

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44 Elemento importante per segnalare il territorio, vista la presenza nella più antica cartografia storica: G.F. Ameti, 1693, in A.P. Frutaz (a cura di), *Le carte del Lazio*, II, (Roma: Arti Grafiche Luigi Salomone, 1972), tav. 176 (XXXIII,1 c).

45 *CIL* 14.2161. Cfr. B. Cacciotti, "Il liberto Agatirso, l'Augusta Plotina e la 'villa' in Vallericcia", in corso di stampa.

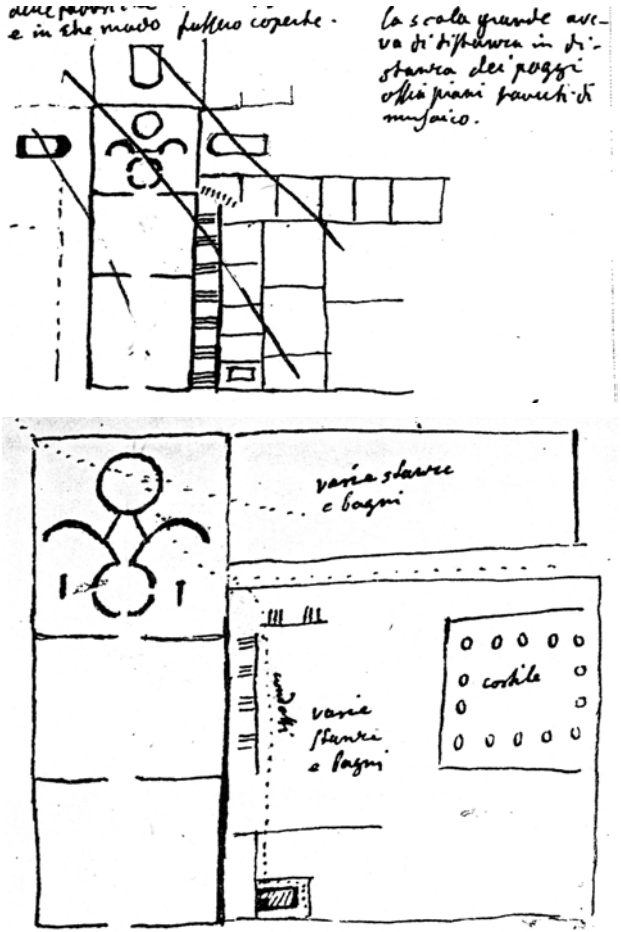
46 Lucidi, *Memorie*, 158; Lilli, *Ariccia*, 90; Moltesen, "Cardinal Despuig's Excavations", 245; M. Lilli, "'. . . super possessione cuisdam Costae Montis, qui dicitur Genzano'. Popolamento dell'area dell'abitato moderno di Genzano di Roma tra l'età repubblicana e l'età imperiale", *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 34 (2009), 56 (al termine di via della Moletta).

47 Andreasen, Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, III, 72, lettera n. 517.

48 Bruun, "Le fistule acquarie", 494.

49 Cfr. quelli del triclinio-ninfeo di Baia: M. Cesarano, "Giochi d'acqua-giochi di potere. Sulla presenza dei cicli statuari giulio-claudii nelle terme del Magdalensberg, presso la fontana monumentale di Nemausus e nella villa imperiale di Baia", *Ostraka* 17 (2008), 29.

FIGURE 22.1 *Statua di "Diana/Ippolito"* (*Dioniso*). *Incisione da: J.M. Bover*, Noticia histórica y artística de los Museos del Eminentísimo Señor Cardenal Despuig existentes en Mallorca, (*Palma: s.n. 1845*), *86.*



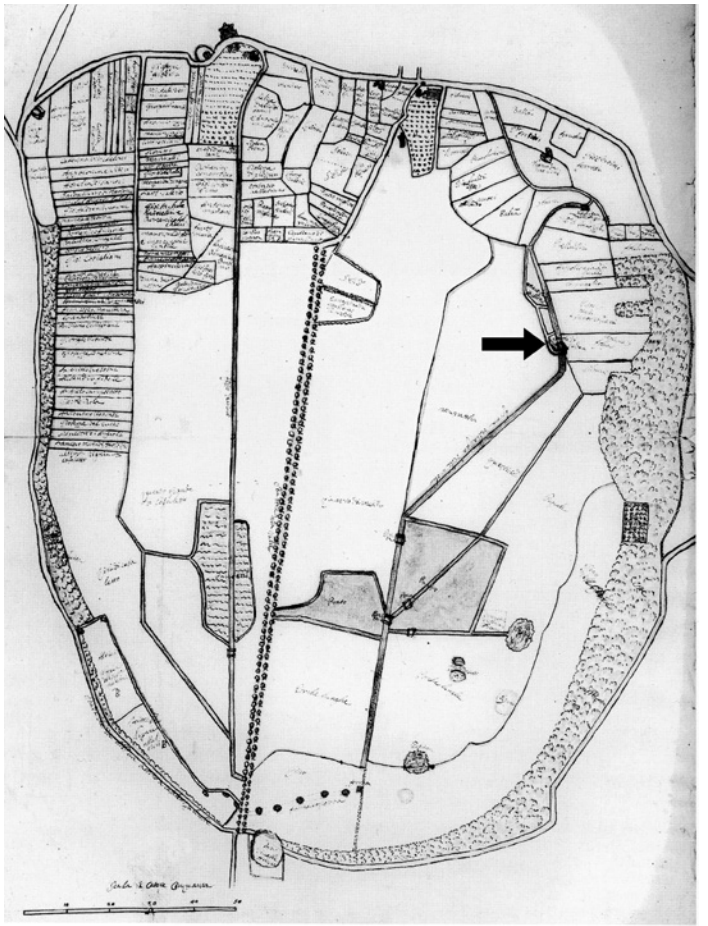


FIGURE 22.2 *a: "Pianta dello scavo aricino". Georg Zoëga,* Apparatus ad Auctoris opus . . ., *f. 179r* (*The Royal Library, Copenaghen*). *b: "Pianta dello scavo arcino". Georg Zoëga,* Apparatus ad Auctoris opus . . ., *f. 179v* (*The Royal Library, Copenaghen*). *c: "Pianta di Vallericcia", metà del XVIII secolo. La freccia indica 'macere mulini'* (*Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio Chigi, n. 24995*).

CHAPTER 23

Friederike Brun, Elisa von der Recke and Georg Zoëga: Members of the '*Universitas* of Rome'[1]

Adelheid Müller

The Protagonists

As a member of the eighteenth century scientific community, Georg Zoëga played an active role in the developing international discourse of antiquarian-archaeological research around 1800, a time when studies of the Antiquity were starting to be differentiated and institutionalized. He was an incorruptible, precise observer, orientated closely to the material evidence, who analysed this tradition with new methodical approach. Also he was an important advocate of the knowledge he won from his many years of object studies. With his rejection of the chair for Classical Archeology, which was created especially for him in 1802 at the university of Kiel, he abstained from an academical career as a university professor. Nontheless he was in Rome a mediator of the Classical Antiquity in personal dialogues outside institutional teachings. This practice was unorthodox in two respects: teaching in the context of a private academy and the instruction of both male and female students.

Both Friederike Brun (fig. 23.1) and Elisa von der Recke (fig. 23.2) chose a life which allowed them to follow their intellectual interests on Classical Antiquity with remarkeable social freedom and autonomy. As a member of the well-established Baltic nobility, Charlotte Elisabeth Konstantina von Medem was born in 1754 near Mitau, the capital of the Dutchy of Courland, today Latvia. At the request of her parents she married at the age of 17 the former officer and landowner Georg Peter Magnus von der Recke. Only five years later she separated from her husband. The painful marriage of convenience was dissolved in 1781, although that divorce resulted in an economically tight situation. The commoner Friederike Sophie Christiane Münter was born in 1765 in Gräfentonna, Thuringia, as the younger sister of Friedrich Münter. The same

1 This article is based on the comprehensive study: A. Müller, *Sehnsucht nach Wissen. Friederike Brun, Elisa von der Recke und die Altertumskunde um 1800*, (Berlin: Reimer, 2012).

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year, their father, the graduated theologist Balthasar Münter was appointed as the principle preacher to the German St. Petri Diocese in Copenhagen. The family moved from Germany to Denmark, where in 1783 the marriage to the wealthy and prosperous merchant Constantin Brun took place. Despite multiple dissonances, Friederike Brun kept up her marital bond.

A part of both women's classical education, of their generation of knowledge, was the study of available printed sources of information: writings on ancient history, mythology, art history and archaeology. Handed-down excerpts from Brun's estate verify the readings of ancient authors such as Plutarch and Cornelius Nepos as well as an analysis of the works by art theorists and historians such as Heinse, Moritz or Winckelmann. These handwritten records give evidence to the practice of scientific techniques such as exerpting, compiling and commentating as a form of memory organisation. Besides their knowledge of books didactically active specialists are constitutive for the scientific socialisation of both women. This has both social and cultural implications: on the one hand there was Copenhagen, the cosmopolitan climate of a protestant vicarage as the social centre of an urban German-Danish elite, to which Brun belonged, and on the other hand there was the restrictive, education-sceptical, class-orientated ambience of the rural nobility in the Baltic countries where Recke, sister-in-law of the last governing Duke of Courland, grew up.

Beginning in the 1780s, extensive travelling activities of both women are revealed, inspired by the ambitous wish to increase their knowledge. Considering their participation in a complex culture of antiquarian knowledge, the heuristical understanding of these travels as a scholary practice permits their mobility to be described as a scholar's journey, or *Peregrinatio academica*. Only travelling allowed them to become personally acquainted with leading scholars of the field of study, to become integrated in professional communication circles and intellectual networks. At the same time their mobility was an essential requirement for the comparative observation of antique works of art, such as their visit to the collections of Potsdam, Dresden, Wörlitz or St. Petersburg which are generally regarded as great sources of knowledge. Object-based experience and therefore a practice-orientated adoption of knowledge, obtained by studies in the field, was equally important for Friedrich Münter, Aloys Hirt and Zoëga. Just as Münter in 1784, Zoëga also undertook an educational journey in 1782 after finishing his catalogue work in Copenhagen and receiving a scholarship from the Danish state. His priority was the ulterior absorption and systematisation of his numismatic acquirements by comparative studies and expert discussions for instance with Johann Joseph Hilarius Eckhel at Vienna. The fact that Zoëga retrospectively put "das

eigentliche Studium seines Fachs erst von der numismatischen Reise" is,[2] with respect to the *Peregrinatio academica* of the autodidacts Brun and Recke, a remarkable valuation of the purposeful travel experience by this *alumnus* of Göttingen University. Autopsy was a major contribution to the professionalisation of classical and ancient studies.

Brun and Recke succeeded as writers not least with their travel reports. Particularly the works published between 1800 and 1833, which are dedicated to their years spent in Italy, signify an excellent competence on the Antiquity. In 1833 Brun's *Römisches Leben* was published.[3] In this work Brun dedicates herself profoundly to topics of the Classical Antiquity, describes the historical topography of Rome and its environs, discusses ancient works of art in the Roman collections and examines the architectural remains of ancient monuments. Antiquarian contents can already be found in her *Tagebuch über Rom* published in 1800–1801.[4] Reckes *Tagebuch einer Reise*, published between 1815 and 1817, also focuses specifically on the Antiquity.[5]

The *Universitas* of Rome

A liberal participation in the discourse of antiquarian subjects was possible above all in Italy, in Rome, when becoming involved in the community of artists and archaeological experts which concentrated here. The private sociability offered an intellectual home. It acted as an educational establishment and as an integrative *Universitas* beyond gender-based restrictions. In fact it was precisely this circle of specialists which offered the option of establishing a private accademy. Although convival gatherings were not lacking, professional discussions always stood in the foreground during these private meetings which were attended by art theorists as Carl Ludwig Fernow, artists as Antonio Canova or Johann Christian Reinhart, as well as archaeologists as Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, Aloys Hirt and above all Zoëga. Precisely this mode of exchanging knowledge practiced in Rome has to be classified as a form of extra-university study. Brun and Recke were able to join in the tradition

2 F.G. Welcker, *Zoega's Leben. Sammlung seiner Briefe und Beurtheilung seiner Werke*, II, (Stuttgart – Tübingen: in der J.G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1819), 223.

3 F. Brun, *Römisches Leben*, I–II, (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1833).

4 F. Brun, *Tagebuch über Rom*, I–II, (Zürich: Orell, Füßli und Co., 1800–1801).

5 E. von der Recke, *Tagebuch einer Reise durch einen Theil Deutschlands und durch Italien in den Jahren 1804 bis 1806*, I–IV, herausgegeben vom Hofrath Böttiger, (Berlin: Nicolai, 1815–1817).

of scholary debate, which around 1800 was practised in Italy by both genders. "Italien ist ein Weiberparadies", a 'women's paradise', wrote Brun in 1814, four years after leaving Rome for ever, appreciating in hindsight the options of this way of life, far apart from social rules and restrictions.[6]

Studies and Professional Discussions

When Brun first came to Rome in 1795, she obtained an archaeological instruction lasting several weeks with the archaeologist Aloys Hirt[7] after being recommended by her brother. Moreso than the very intelligent, but rather cold Hirt—"fein/artig/klug/kalt"—it was the the more open and friendly Zoëga—"wie gut und herzig"—who became an important mediator and academic authority.[8] While Recke did not make his personal acquaintance until she went to Rome in 1804, Brun met him already in 1779 just after completion of his studies in Göttingen. In the prefaces of their travel writings they emphasized their mutual archaeological excursions with him and his "Erläuterung der Monumente des Altertums".[9] For both women Zoëga became a discussion partner with whom they were soon at eye level. This intensive professional exchange is reflected in the archaeological topics which both women addressed in their writings. The following examples will make this evident.

Reliefs

Representative is their interest in mythological and historical reliefs, an individual preference which they shared with Zoëga, who studied these during long-term research projects: "In Zoèga's Begleitung ziehen mich immer die Basreliefs doppelt an", Brun wrote.[10] Especially during her first stay in Rome many objects of this genre were set in comparative relation to each other. By

6 *Friedrich v. Matthisson's Literarischer Nachlaß nebst einer Auswahl von Briefen seiner Freunde*, II, (Berlin: August Mylius, 1832), 42.

7 A. Müller, "« Docendo discimus » . . . durch das Lehren lernen wir. Aloys Hirts Jahre als Cicerone in Rom", in *Aloys Hirt. Archäologe, Historiker, Kunstkenner*, herausgegeben von C. Sedlarz, (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2004), 15–68.

8 F. Brun, NKS 2654, 4° n. 10 fol. 7.

9 Brun, *Römisches Leben*, I, v.

10 Brun, *Tagebuch über Rom*, I, 367.

studying the relief depictions, Brun was able to increase her understanding of the Antique considerably.

Zoëga devoted intensive studies to the analysis of the ancient "Basreliefs", which he regarded to be "alles, was nicht Statue oder runde Arbeit ist".[11] The reliefs preserved in collections and in the city of Rome were after coins, the most instructive class of figured monuments,[12] as Zoëga's astonishingly progressive understanding of this—up till then—neglected genre of historic monuments tells us. He placed great importance on the attentive examination of previously disregarded details, drew up precise and comprehensive descriptions and endeavoured to consequently and distinctly mark all later additions. Zoëga strove to gather and to describe the complete works of art of Ancient Rome, in particular the richly figured and mythologically important reliefs—he is the *spiritus rector* of the *corpora* works which emerged during the course of the nineteenth century. Over many years he compiled a vast catalogue of the monuments. However the actual publication of the extensive preliminary studies for the *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma* remained limited to the collections of the Albani Palace and Villa.[13]

Several motives which Zoëga discusses, as the depictions of Lykurg or the Mithras cult, are also important issues in the journals of Recke and Brun. Their discussions on Mithras also testify the topicality of such debate on the cultic context of this god, inflamed not at least by recent excavation findings in Ostia. In her *Römisches Leben* for instance, during the observation of a relief in the Villa Giustiniani, Brun discusses the mythological implications of the Mithras cult.[14] She emphasises the freer, more spontaneous form of myth interpretation that Zoëga allows himself when standing in front of the object, which contrasts strongly with the fixed written documentations and she underlines the benefit which the interpretative approach inspired by these on-site discussions offered.[15] In Recke's journal, too, numerous references to the sarcophagi and reliefs of the visited collections and detailed descriptions of individual objects can be found. Besides prominent examples which were already imbedded into a broader heritage canon, lesser known examples are discussed. In their comparative observations of the various objects, which not only include other genres but also consider stylistic criteria within this genre and raise

11 G. Zoëga, *Die antiken Basreliefe von Rom*, I, (Giessen: Müller, 1811), 3.

12 Ibid.

13 G. Zoëga, *Li Bassirilievi antichi di Roma*, I–II, (Roma: presso Francesco Bourlié, 1808).

14 Brun, *Römisches Leben*, II, 112–113.

15 A further specialised debate arose on the diversity of the iconographical representations for example of Cupid and Psyche, more see Müller, *Sehnsucht nach Wissen*, 332–344.

questions on their affiliation with the relief, both women obtain professional interpretative competence and participate in a virulent scholarly debate.

Contextualisation

Beyond a mere interest in the history of the motive and the icononographical programme of the sarcophagus reliefs, the purpose of use is equally important for Brun and Recke. In the course of the autopsy the sarcophagi are contextualised in relation to their original function, reaching beyond their museal presentation. The inspection of the Roman grave architecture formed the focus of their excursions with Zoëga. Both Brun and Recke thematize the sepulchral architecture that was found along the via Appia.[16] Whereas, during their earlier observations of the sarcophagi in the collections, the interpretation of the pictorial programme stood in the foreground, priority was now given to the sarcophagus as a relief carrier together with its original location, and consequently the connection of the architectural burial site with the practiced burial rituals. Both discuss various tombs on the via Appia as the "Grabmaal der Freigelassenen der Livia" (*columbarium*) or the grave of the Scipions. Recke describes in detail the mausoleum of Claudia Semne, that was excavated in 1792 "in Gegenwart meines Freundes Zoëga, am Appischen Wege ganz in der Nähe der Sebastianskirche".[17] Zoëga for his part describes some of the objects found here in his work *De origine et usu obeliscorum*.[18]

Topography

Excursions to the via Appia in Zoëga's company were also part of the topographical surveys on the urban area of Rome and its environs. This marks another focal point of research both in Zoëga's studies and in those of Brun and Recke. Among Zoëga's numerous archaeological, numismatical, epigraphical and philological research projects, his profound studies on the topography of Rome took first priority. Beginning during his first years in Rome right up to his death in 1809 he continually developed and refined his objective to create a topography of Ancient Rome orientated on recent archaeological findings.

16 Ibid., 351–356.

17 Recke, *Tagebuch einer Reise*, II, 197–199.

18 G. Zoëga, *De origine et usu obeliscorum ad Pium Sextum pontificem maximum*, (Romae: typis Lazzarinii Typographi Cameralis, 1797), 370.

A first concept existed around 1800 in French, an extended version in German followed in 1803. Both studies as a whole remained unpublished. Brun's attempt to persuade Wilhelm von Humboldt to publish it after Zoëgas death failed[19]—a posthumous publication of the materials was never realised. Only the *Anfang einer Römischen Topographie*, an almost complete paragraph on the Capitoline Hill, was published by Welcker in 1817 in a German translation as part of Zoëga's *Abhandlungen*.[20] Recke and Brun covered the topics thorougly in a vast number of excursions undertaken with Zoëga. New research results which he had attained during the course of his studies and which challenged canonical knowledge on archaeology were adopted in his lectures. The further development of these research results and above all their differentiating discussions on the evidence of the archaeological records were also expressed in the works of Brun and Recke. The first three volumes of Reckes *Tagebuchs einer Reise*, which already contain a detailed historical-topographical description of the Capitoline Hill and the Palatine Hill were published two years before Welcker's publication.[21] Refering to the actuality of the level of knowledge, Brun focuses on the Roman topography:

> Es werden diese Bände besonders den wichtigsten Theil der Topographie des alten Roms enthalten, sowie Zoëga solche bis zum Tage seines Todes als richtig erkannte (…) Alles (…) ist dem Munde des Unvergeßlichen entnommen, auf der Stelle notirt, dann ins römische Tagebuch eingetragen und sorgfältig ausgearbeitet.[22]

Documentation

This practice of acquiring archaeological knowledge, documenting it immediately and subsequently elaborating on it, can be demonstrated exemplarily. For instance when Zoëga revised the previous interpretation of the topographical situation at the Forum Boarium during an excursion they undertook together. The Forum, where several sanctuaries were located, was already used in early times as a trading centre. An ionic pseudo-peripteros and a round temple still

19 A. von Sydow (hrsg.), *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt in ihren Briefen*, II, (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 93.

20 F.G. Welcker (hrsg.), *Georg Zoëgas Abhandlungen*, (Göttingen: in der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1817), 331–352.

21 Recke, *Tagebuch einer Reise*, II, 3–26.

22 Brun, *Römisches Leben*, I, vi–vii.

remain from the ancient development. Based on Flavio Biondo's *Roma ristaurata* these buildings were interpreted even up until the twentieth century as the temples of Fortuna Virilis and Vesta. Zoëga, however, was successful in having justifiably re-named the latter as temple of Hercules Victor, which has been confirmed by today's research.[23] Brun describes this in her hand-written diary during a visit to the site which she undertook together with Zoëga on 30th November 1802. Her sketch-like notes are an immediate reference to her talks with Zoëga.[24] Based on the sketch which she drew around the same time, she delivers a detailed description of the antique round temple which appeared in a subsequently revised printed version such as is to be found in *Römisches Leben*.[25] With the reference to her elaboration of the information gathered, Brun explicitly marks her personal contribution to the formulated findings.

Recke also covered the historical topography of the city together with Zoëga in numerous excursions to the antique monuments of Rome. By no means was only a canonical repertoire worked on. Recke visited also sites which had rarely been studied around 1800. Inspired by an audience with Pope Pius VII, during which the main topic of discussion was Antiquity, she decided, for example, to visit the site at Ostia accompanied by the artist Reinhart and by Zoëga. Here extensive excavations were carried out between 1802 and 1805, initiated by Carlo Fea. Recke documented the *status quo* and compared the topography of Ostia with that of Pompeji—new standards of knowledge were established.[26] Not only Welcker makes explicit reference to the coherance between Zoëga's *Topographie von Rom* and Recke's travel diary.[27] With reference to her findings, also the archeologist and publisher of Recke's journal, Karl August Böttiger, declares a technically competent essay on the topography of Rome to be a desideratum, thus implicitly emphasising the close collaboration of Zoëga and Recke: in particular the on-site inspections preceding the documentation but also the actuality and completeness of their executions compared to previous literature on the topography.[28]

23 G. Brands, M. Maischberger, "Der Tempel des Hercules Invictus, die Porta Trigemina und die Porta Triumphalis", *Rivista di archeologia* 19 (1995), 102–120.

24 F. Brun, NKS 2654, 4° Nr. 13 fol. 170–171.

25 Brun, *Römisches Leben*, I, 206–209.

26 Recke, *Tagebuch einer Reise*, IV, 105–130.

27 Welcker, *Zoega's Leben*, 236–238.

28 Recke, *Tagebuch einer Reise,* I, XXVI–XXVII.

To Sum Up

Zoëga's extensive studies, including the urban and extraurban topography of Rome, only become available in Brun's and Recke's written documentation concerning the results of their scientific discussions. Thus these are the only present documentions of this important research from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Through the posthumous publication of the documented discourses with Zoëga, both women self-confidently establish themselves as multiplicators, who reflect the latest level of knowledge of antiquarian archeology in an individual formulation. They contribute to our knowledge of archeology not only as collectors and archivers but much more through their creative act of documentation. The formulation of their experiences and the associated integration of their individual, personal expertise, the connoisseurship of their highly specialised knowledge is their own intellectual achievement. Zoëga's method of scientific discourse, around 1800 still in the form of a private academy—the *Universitas* of Rome—was trend-setting.[29] Twenty years after his death on 21st April 1829 the Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica was founded: which has its intellectual, structural and personal roots in the academic discourse practiced and performed decades before, in which Brun and Recke participated as archeological academic members of the *Universitas* of Rome.

29 Müller, *Sehnsucht nach Wissen*, 457–465.

FIGURE 23.1 *Heinrich Jakob Aldenrath, Friederike Brun, 1818, Miniature Portrait (ivory). Private ownership (© Photo: Ole Woldbye)*

FIGURE 23.2 *Gerhard von Kügelgen, Elisa von der Recke, 1812, Oil on Canvas. Dresden, Städtische Galerie, Kunstsammlung: Museum zur Dresdner Frühromantik, Inv. Nr. 1980/K 35* (*© Städtische Galerie, Kunstsammlung, Photo: Franz Zadnicek*)

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